

LINE DRAWING FOR REPRODUCTION

“How to do it” Series

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- 2. WOOD-ENGRAVING AND WOODCUTS, by Clare Leighton
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LINE DRAWING FOR REPRODUCTION

BY ASHLEY HAVINDEN

“How to do it” Series No. 4

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Introduction

Every year more and more young people are turning to drawing for reproduction as a means of earning their livelihood. Some of them have just finished a course of instruction in an art school, some of them are hoping to exploit a natural untutored facility for drawing which they have had from childhood. All of them fare forth with a conviction in their minds that there is awaiting them an Eldorado of commercial art in which they will have no difficulty in rising rapidly to fame and fortune. *Ambition*

Undoubtedly, there is an ever-growing demand for the work of the clever commercial artist, both in advertising and journalism. This demand is due to the growth of newspapers and periodicals, made possible by the invention of the fast-printing rotary press, and the enormously increased facilities of modern transport. *Opportunity*

The opportunity does exist. There is an Eldorado. But success depends entirely on that adjective "clever." Cleverness is of two kinds. It is said of one man, "he has clever hands," and of another, "he has a clever mind." *Warning*

Too many artists with brilliantly clever hands fall short of success because they do not develop a mental adroitness equal to their drawing skill.

They bring to the world of commerce the same detached attitude of mind with which they would paint masterpieces in their own studios. They say to themselves, "I am an artist. The business man must use me." They do not realise that very often the business man does not know how to use them. He speaks another language. Too often he tries to bargain with the artist for his creative ideas as if he were buying pounds of cheese or bacon. He does not do this because he despises the artist, but simply because he is too busy to try to understand him. He applies to him the same methods which have brought him success in other fields, and then is surprised at the poor result. *The buyer's point of view*

The commercial artist, if he is to succeed, must not be too proud to go a good deal more than half-way to meet his patron, the business man. Artists have always had patrons. In the Middle Ages they were high dignitaries of the church and wealthy noblemen. To-day the grand seigneur has become the business magnate, who requires the help *Success*

of the artist in his commercial undertakings. The only difference is that the patron of the past was a man of culture and taste, who usually knew his own mind. The business man is very often quite unversed in matters of art. Therefore, if there is to be any real understanding between the artist and his patron, the artist must help to bring it about. He must learn to sell as well as to draw. He must be able to explain and expound the merits of his work.

Approach This book is written in the hope that it may be of use to those who are setting out on a career as a commercial artist, by giving not only a few hints on the technical knowledge they will require, but also on the mental outlook most conducive to success.

Study In this new edition, I have managed to increase considerably the number and variety of examples of established artists' work. A study of these should go a long way in giving the student a comprehensive idea of what is successful in book illustration, journalism and advertising.

Emulation This gallery of work, as it were, in the latter part of the book forms a kind of measuring rule of the standard set today by the best exponents of drawing in line for reproduction. Thus, the student by measuring his own work by them, should be able to decide in what direction to go and wherein his own work most needs improvement.

Ashley Havinden
London, July, 1941

Evolution of line and tone reproduction

Drawing in line for reproduction is a descendant of the early wood-cut, which was the first mechanical means of printing.

The notion of printing was derived from the copying of hand-writing on to blocks of wood, so that the form of each letter stood out in relief. The letters thus produced, when arranged in words, were then smeared with ink and the printed result was obtained by pressing a piece of parchment or paper heavily upon them. This process was repeated continually so that copies of the original manuscript could be multiplied much faster and more economically than could ever be produced by hand.

The wood letter

Before this invention, books had of necessity to be hand-written throughout; and any decoration or illustration of the text, was executed by the scribe, or by a collaborator who specialised more in this work. This latter was known as a rubricator. He did his work in as many colours as he liked, and introduced very often a great deal of subtlety in his execution of delicate shading and minute detail. He was, indeed, a miniature painter of great skill.

Scribes and rubricators

After the invention of printing the embellishment of the page was still continued by hand, but it soon became increasingly difficult to multiply enough books when the illustrations had always to be added in this laborious way. It followed, that if handwriting could be copied in wood, why not the illustrations as well—then the whole book, text and pictures, could be printed together.

Early illustration

An illustrative work had to be reduced to a linear convention before it could be cut on to wood-blocks. This meant a considerable simplification of the early rubricator's art, particularly as the wood-cutters were often men with only a crudely developed technique in their new craft.

The wood-cut

Although, of course, the craft of copying other people's conceptions on to wood persisted right up to the beginning of this century, the majority of the wood-cut illustrations in books were the original work of the wood-cutter himself. A great many of these men became so completely identified

Surface of a wood block



with the new craft of printing that every aspect of book production invited their special care and study. They became experts in binding—leather tooling—paper making—type designing—wood-cutting—ink mixing, etc. They were the pioneers of the propagation of knowledge through the means of mechanical reproduction.

Many of the results of their labours are still treasured as models of good work, to be followed by all who wish to excel as printers. They are, indeed, the “old masters” of printing. Many people regard their work as unsurpassed to this day.

The steel engraving

Following the woodcut came the steel engraving, which is the opposite process to wood-block printing. That is to say, in a wood-block the part to be printed is raised from the surface of the block, so that the paper comes in contact only with the raised part. In the steel engraving the line is cut into the surface of a steel plate. The plate is then inked, wiped over with a rag, cleaning the surface, but leaving the ink in the engraved lines. In printing, therefore, only this indented inked portion left an impression on the paper. This was obtained by damping the paper and applying it to the plate with great pressure. The engraving process, like the wood-block, had the limitation of making it necessary for the artist's original drawing to be re-created by the engraver, sometimes to the detriment of the drawing.

The line block

The next big development was the line block, which was only made possible by the invention of the camera. After photographing the sketch, the negative thus produced is printed on to a piece of zinc, instead of, as in an ordinary snapshot, on to bromide paper. The zinc plate is then etched by acids so that all parts of the metal, except where the photographic impression of the line appears, is eaten away. The same result is therefore obtained in metal as in the wood-block,

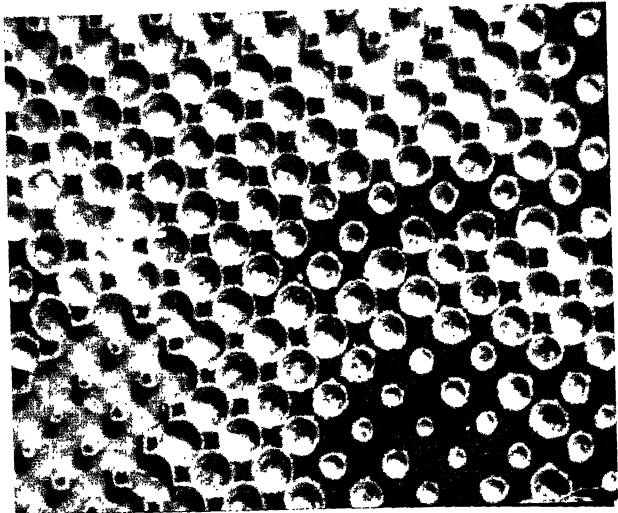
with the advantage of being much more rapidly carried out, and of being a mechanically exact reproduction of the original sketch.

In addition to the line block there is the half-tone block, which is used for reproducing photographs, also flat wash, charcoal, and pencil drawings. It must be understood that in Printing, only solids can be reproduced. Grada-



Surface of a zinc line-block mounted on wood

Surface of a copper half-tone block greatly magnified. Only the black portions are the raised parts. The globular circles are the parts eaten away by acids.



tions of tones therefore must be obtained by breaking the tones up into series of small solids of varying size. The mechanical means of breaking up these tones is done by what is known as the half-tone screen. This screen is a piece of plate glass, which is ruled with thin lines drawn horizontally and vertically equidistant from each other. It is placed in the camera, before photo-

graphing the tone drawing. The tones in the negative obtained are thus broken up into small dots, varying in size and density according to the values of the sketch being photographed through the screen. *The half-tone*

The maximum or minimum number of dots possible to the square inch is determined by the fineness or coarseness of the ruled screen used. If the dots are very close together (fine screen) it is impossible to print them on coarse paper or on newspaper stock, because the printing ink would fill up the interstices between them. Therefore for coarse paper printing the dots must be bigger and further apart (coarse screen) than is necessary for fine paper printing.

The full range of half-tone screens in general use are 55, 65, 85, 100, 120, 133, 150, 175 and 200 lines to every square inch. Screens finer than 200 lines are sometimes used, but there is little call for them in everyday practice. The coarse screens range from 55 to 85 lines to the square inch, and are used for newspaper and cheap qualities of paper generally. The fine screens, starting with 100 lines to the square inch, are used for smooth-surfaced papers, such as one finds in the best magazines. *Half-tone screens*

The finishing process for a half-tone block is similar to that used for line blocks. The portions of the metal plate not represented by dots are eaten away by acids. *Etching*

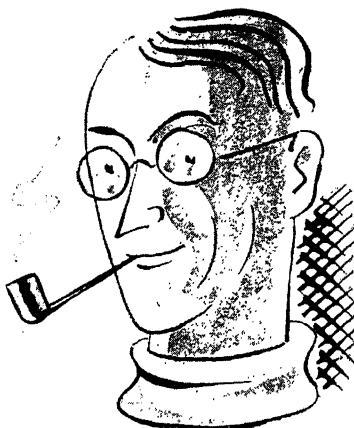
The reader will now see that whichever type of block is used, the basic principle of printing from a raised surface as in the early woodcut is still adhered to. *Raised printing surface*

Reproduction It is very important for the artist to understand the principle of the half-tone block, because he will now see that all tones are broken up into a dot equivalent. If the tones are very delicate and subtle in a drawing intended for a daily newspaper, the coarse screen which it is necessary to use will break up the tones in such a way that their delicate variations will be entirely lost. Therefore every commercial artist should find out beforehand what kind of paper his drawing is going to be reproduced on ; so that he can vary his technique accordingly.

Six variations in half-tone



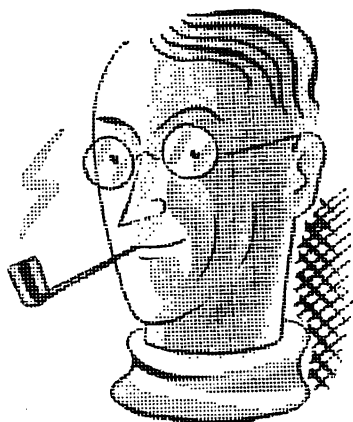
Combined line and half-tone. High-lights cut out



Half-tone. High lights cut-out



Coarse screen half-tone. High-lights cut out.



Linen screen half-tone. High-lights cut out.



Half-tone. High-lights left.



Grain-screen half-tone

To the student reader

Although Plato in his ideal republic wished to exclude the artist as an unnecessary unit of social life, popular enthusiasm has shown him to be wrong.

The artist has always played a part in re-interpreting external phenomena in such a way that the rest of humanity could grasp its significance. It is doubtful whether anyone would have appreciated the plastic beauty of the human form if Michel Angelo had never painted his frescoes. In the same way that poets have given significance to the expression of emotion, artists have given significance to the expression of visual beauty. *The artist*

The artist is supposed to have a direct vision, which enables him to see things as they are in terms of themselves, whereas the ordinary man tends to see things always in their relation to something else already in his mind. Metaphorically speaking, when the artist is eating an egg, he is only eating an egg. But when the ordinary man is eating an egg, he sees himself having his breakfast ! *His vision*

The artist draws his inspiration from the phenomena surrounding him ; borrowing from life the shapes and forms which are to be the integral part of his work. *Inspiration*

If it is the mental construction that man puts upon the impressions he receives that makes him either intelligent or stupid—so it is the visual construction the artist puts upon what he sees, that makes his work either good or bad.

If an artist's work is to have vitality it must be his own direct response to the stimulus of his surroundings. In other words, he must live very much in the present. The old masters in their time lived in the 'present' and the quality of their work resulted from their virile reaction to that present. *Live in the present*

The student of art therefore in responding to the period he is living in, must analyse his reactions to it with a view to understanding the impulses of society which make that period what it is.

This attitude of mind is particularly important for the artist working for commerce. To give an example of what I mean : supposing an artist is designing a new year card. He would certainly not be showing a proper understanding of the tempo of our time, if he symbolised the passing of the old year into the new, by creating a version of an old man with a long beard and scythe in one hand as *Vitality of expression*

representing what we are pleased to call Old Father Time, or a new-born babe with a pink sash round its middle, a quill pen in one hand, and an old-fashioned egg-boiling sand-glass in the other!

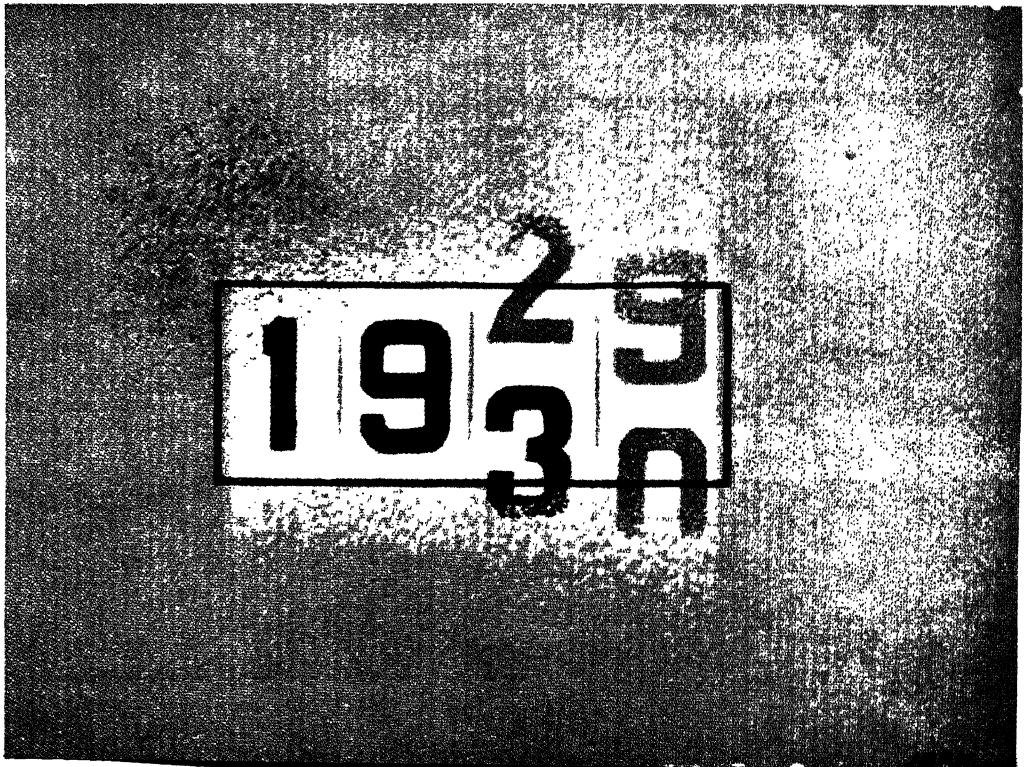
*Contemporary
symbolism*

Can anyone really state with his hand on his heart that either of these two symbols really expresses the feelings of a man of to-day about the passing of time? Both of them, you will notice, are drawn from the past, and are so well worn that they have lost any significance they may have had.

But what did Jean Carlu, the well-known French poster designer, do when faced with this problem? He created a form borrowed from a motor car speedometer showing 1929 passing into 1930, thereby making a graphic symbol expressive of our fast-moving world.

Conduct

This contemporary outlook should not only inspire the work of the commercial artist of to-day, but it should also affect his attitude to life. The day of the long-haired, unshaven, velvet-coated artist is definitely over, at all events as far as the commercial artist is concerned.



New Year card by Jean Carlu

If the modern manufacturer is to have confidence in the artist whom he calls in to advise him on the design of his products, or the advertising of his name, he must feel that he is dealing with a sensible individual who behaves in a rational manner, not with a Bohemian dilettante.

So let the novice in commercial art pay heed to outward semblance as well as inward ability. It must not be imagined that this attitude of mind is to be adopted as a subterfuge to impress the business man. It will carry no conviction unless it is a genuine belief in the important rôle the artist has to play in collaborating with the business man in the improvement of design in industry.

Another point to remember is always submit your work as if you were proud of it. How can an artist expect his client to respect a sketch, and incidentally pay a lot of money for it, if he submits it on an untidy, half-dirty piece of board or paper, unmounted, and probably covered with white paint corrections and erasures? While on the subject of white paint, I believe that every artist should train himself not to rely on correcting by means of white paint, as this practice teaches him to be slovenly and casual in seizing the apt line as he thinks of it. Sensibility cannot be imparted to a line unless it is there in the first place.

As Jean Cocteau said: "It is not in thinking of the totality of the life towards which the lines tend that a draughtsman creates a living work, but in sensing his line to be in danger of death at every step of its progress from the beginning to the end. An acrobat's danger. This is the price to be paid if the whole is to have an existence of its own, and become a living organism, instead of being the dead representation of a living form. Any other kind of craftsmanship will result in a mere apeing of the original."

The leading commercial artists of to-day state their problems to themselves with crystal clarity and solve them with the accuracy and precision of an engineer. They are architects of design as well as masters of the graphic image. They study the aesthetic as well as the practical aspect of their work, and relate them together in an inevitable synthesis. It is this quality of mind, coupled with their masterly execution, which sets them head and shoulders above their fellows.

Therefore be tidy, exact, businesslike, punctual, and control your temperament so that it becomes your servant instead of your master.

*Integrity
towards
buyer*

Tidiness

*Something
to aim at*

Materials for drawing in line

Materials Although this page is headed "materials," they play a very small part in the practising commercial artist's equipment. As you have probably gathered from the preceding pages, his stock-in-trade is far more mental than physical. However, good paper or board which does not splutter when a pen line is applied is necessary. For pencil, charcoal, conté-crayon or negro pencil, a good cartridge paper is to be recommended. For clean pen work, Bristol board is economical and provides a smooth white surface on which wrong lines can easily be removed with a penknife or razor blade. A more solid surface to work on is a Whatman hot-pressed board, which can be had in rough or smooth surfaces, both suitable for brushes, pen, water-colour, charcoal, conté or pencil. Remember, the whiter the paper or board, for delicate pen work, the easier it is for the blockmaker to reproduce your sketch. All forms of tinted or coloured papers photograph grey on the negative, and therefore take away from the crispness of your line.

Experiment I have shown opposite a photograph of various implements, all of which produce different sorts of lines. The student must try his hand at all of them (with the possible exception of the five-pronged pen, which is really only a "gadget." Rarely does the ink flow successfully down all five prongs at the same time!). Only by practice can he determine the texture of line—whether by using pen-nibs, thick or thin, brushes, charcoal or conté—which lends most fluency and spontaneity to the images he wishes to record. Some artists are much happier using rich flowing lines done with a brush, and others get their best results from a thin, delicate, sensitive line with a few pale washes. It is very rare for one artist to use both techniques with equal facility. The implements opposite are :

Implements 1. *Five-pronged pen*
2. *Waverley pen*

This nib is useful because it draws a thickish line with a slightly rough edge, giving a little more sensibility than an entirely hard line can get.

3. *Crow-quill pen*

Remarkable for its range of line. It can draw a very thin line as well as a very thick one. It can also grade a thin line into a thick one in true copperplate manner

4. *Relief nib*

Although made of copper, the nib tends to be too hard and inflexible to get a line of much interest.

5. *Waterman fountain pen*

This pen carries indian ink without

clogging, and for rapid pen work is remarkably useful, owing to the consistently even flow of ink. It can be supplied with any shape of nib required.

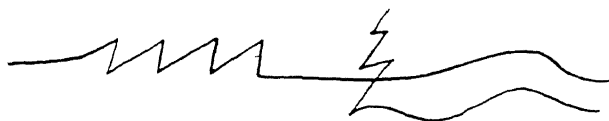
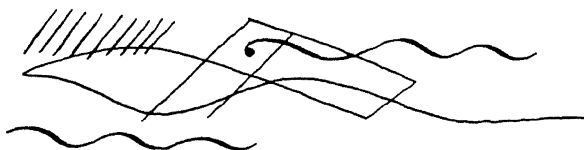
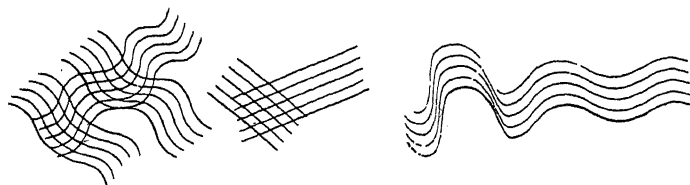
6. *Sable hair water-colour brush*

7. *Conté-crayon*

Can be had in various softnesses and gives a line similar to charcoal, but is easier to handle because it has a wooden sheath like a pencil, and can be sharpened to quite a fine point. Drawings need fixing to avoid smudging.

8. *Negro pencil*

Is useful because of its strong black line. Its composition is much greasier than the conté-crayon, but on rough paper it gives a similar result and does not smudge to anything like the same degree.



Implements and their uses

Variations in treatment

Simple outline

The illustration on page 20 shows a drawing done with a crow-quill pen without any variation in the strength of the line. The value of this type of drawing is that it will print on any surface of paper, whether it is newspaper stock, or super-calendered art paper as used by the best magazines. When printed on good paper the line has enough strength and sensibility to be interesting, while in the newspaper, although the line will thicken up, it will still retain its delicacy. The thickening of the line will be compensated for by the fact that all black lines print a trifle greyly, owing to the poor quality of newspaper stock which tends to absorb the ink. The shiny art paper, on the other hand, leaves the ink impression hard and brilliant on its surface. This you can observe for yourself if you compare a line drawing in "Vogue," for example, with a similarly executed drawing in a daily newspaper.

This line drawing can be reduced to a third the size and still print clearly as shown below. The larger drawing reproduced is the actual size of the original. It is advisable for a commercial artist to own a reducing glass, so that he can gauge thoroughly the effect of reduction on a drawing.

Variations

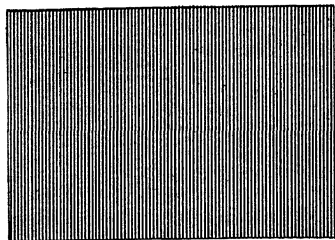
To demonstrate how line drawings print, I have taken the same basic design and treated it in various ways. It makes a difficult drawing test, because one rarely conceives a sketch quite in the same way if one is using shading as when one is using pure outline or tints. For purposes of comparison, however, my sketches I hope will suffice.

Blockmakers' tints

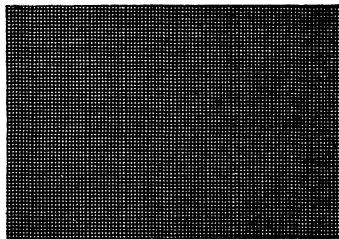
On the opposite page are a few examples of blockmakers' tints. A similar chart to the one illustrated will be supplied by any blockmaker reproducing your drawings. The tints are numbered and all you have to do is to shade the various parts of the drawing with a blue pencil where you want the different tints, and write on the margin of your drawing the reference numbers of the tints you have selected. Why you use a blue pencil is that while it shows the tint-layer where you want the different tints it will not photograph in with the black lines, because the camera cannot pick up blue without using a pan-chromatic plate.

Mechanical tints applied by the blockmaker

(The 12 tints below are chosen at random from C. & E. Layton's book of over 100 varieties)



No. 1



No. 1a

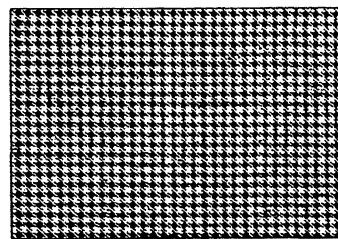
No. 509



No. 7



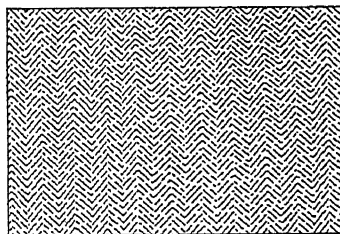
No. 7a



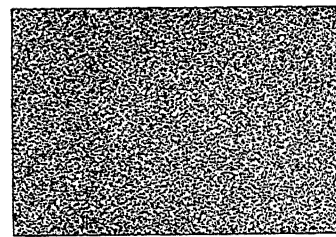
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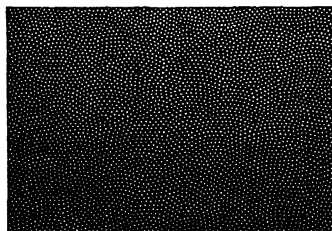
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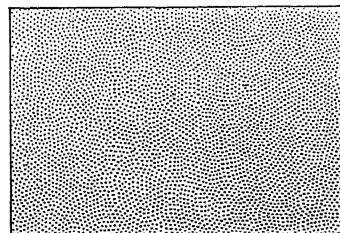
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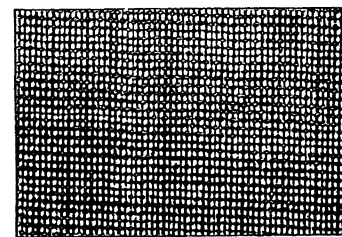
No. 329



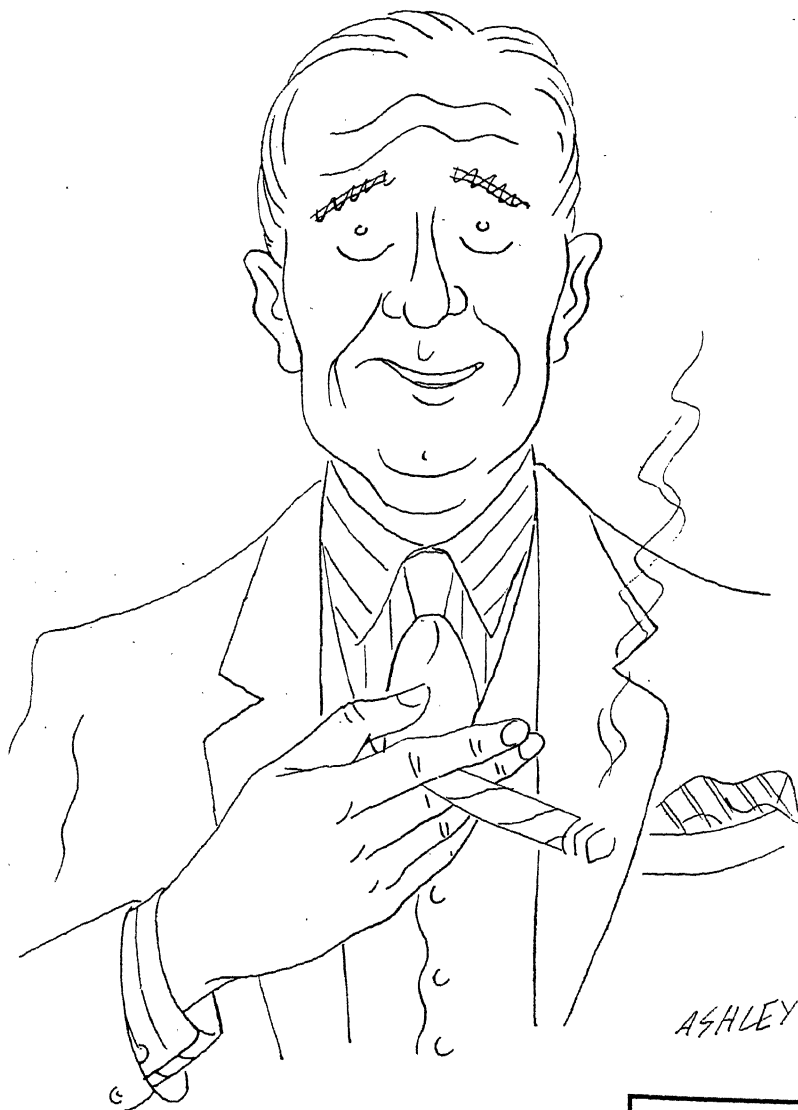
No. 441



No. 437

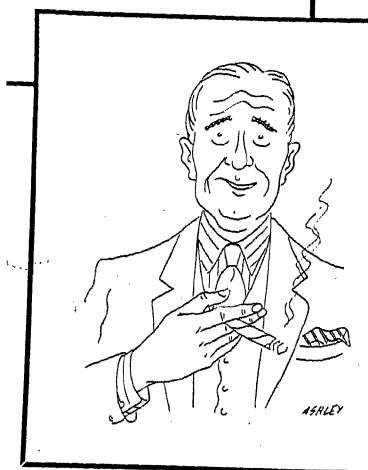


No. 337



The simplest form of line drawing

*The larger reproduction is the actual size of the original.
The smaller one is one-third the size thus showing the degree
of reduction possible without losing the line altogether.*





The same drawing shaded

Perfect for reproduction in any medium whether magazine or newspaper—but the smaller drawing reduces the detail in the shading too much for good newspaper reproduction although it will be satisfactory for magazines, using good quality surfaced paper.



Tints and their uses

What happens when the blockmaker gets your sketch is this. He first photographs it down on to metal as for an ordinary line block. He then refers to your sketch to see where to lay the tint. He next paints all over the block with a solution of gum and water, except where the tint is to appear. He then applies the tint sheet, which is made of gelatine, to the plate. Although the tint has gone all over the plate, immediately cold water is applied those parts which he had previously painted out with gum and water solution wash clean, leaving the tint only on the unprotected part. This process has to be repeated until each tint indicated on the sketch has been laid. The plate is now ready for etching as for an ordinary line block.

Pen shading

The drawing on page 21 shows the application of definitely gradated shading, still using the crow-quill pen. This drawing, if it is to retain its crispness for newspaper reproduction, should not be reduced below the size shown, otherwise there is a danger of the small pieces of white in the shading filling up with ink, as well as each little individual line thickening up in the process, thereby coarsening the whole effect. For good magazine reproduction, the detail should be retained if the drawing is not reduced more than a third the original size.

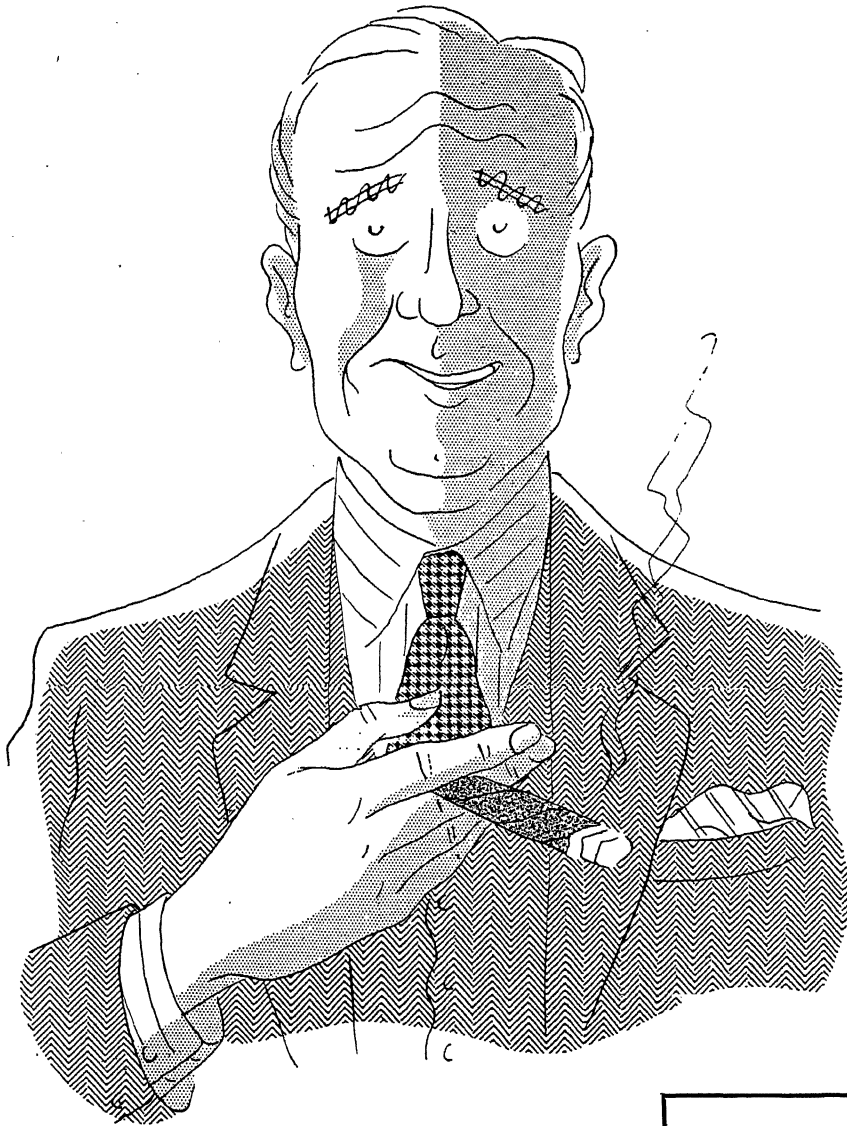
Varied tints

You will see by the drawing on the opposite page that I have selected from the tint chart No. 335 for the suit, tint No. 509 for the hand, a portion of the face, collar and shirt, tint No. 323 for the tie, and tint No. 329 for the cigar.

By comparing this drawing with the one on page 20 it can be observed how much depth and body has been obtained with no extra labour by the artist. Before the invention of mechanical tints all this detail would have had to have been put in by hand, which means it wouldn't have been done at all!

If one reduces a drawing using tints it must be remembered that the tints remain the same size as on the tint chart.

Tints like half-tone screens vary in texture to suit different printing surfaces. If your drawing is for newspaper reproduction it is advisable before deciding definitely on any given tint to consult the blockmaker in order to make sure that you have not selected a tint that will be too fine to print!



The same drawing with tints applied

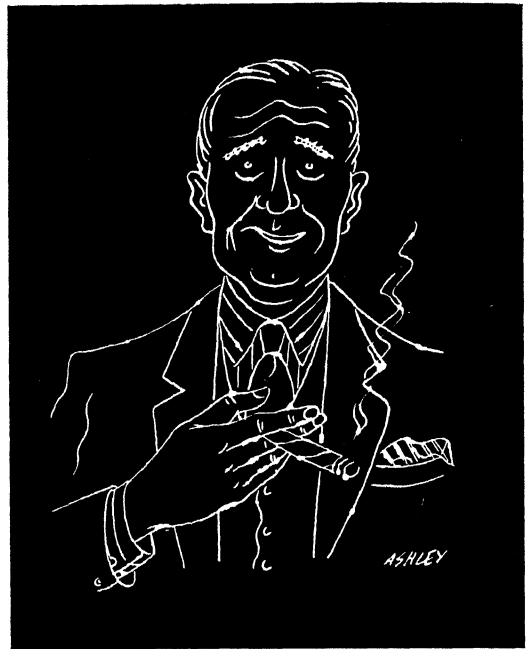
Without any extra labour by the artist the blockmaker can add body and texture to his simple line drawing. The smaller block shows how the tints chosen for the bigger block are quite unsuitable. They are too coarse and open to go with outlines now reduced to such fineness.



Six other
possible variations
from the
same original

I have shown on this spread some of the possible variations that can be got by the blockmaker from the same original. In this way he can be of great assistance to the artist. For instance, the student will readily appreciate the enormous difference between a black-and-white drawing and the reverse white on black of it. Think how difficult it would be to paint with a brush and chinese-white a line with anything like the same sensibility on a piece of black paper—compared with the ease with which a black pen line can be drawn on a piece of white paper.

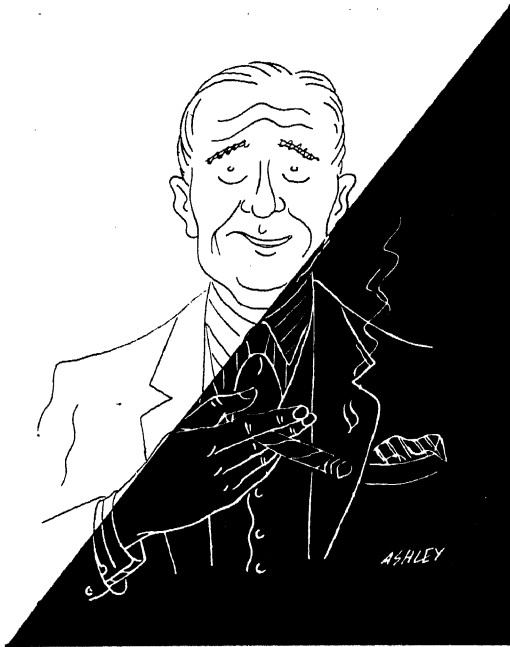
The student will appreciate that no one drawing can be subjected to so many variations and still look well in all of them. This is a demonstration only of how the blockmaker can interpret his work if necessary. The suitability of the sketch and how it is to be used must decide the artist whether such assistance is needed.



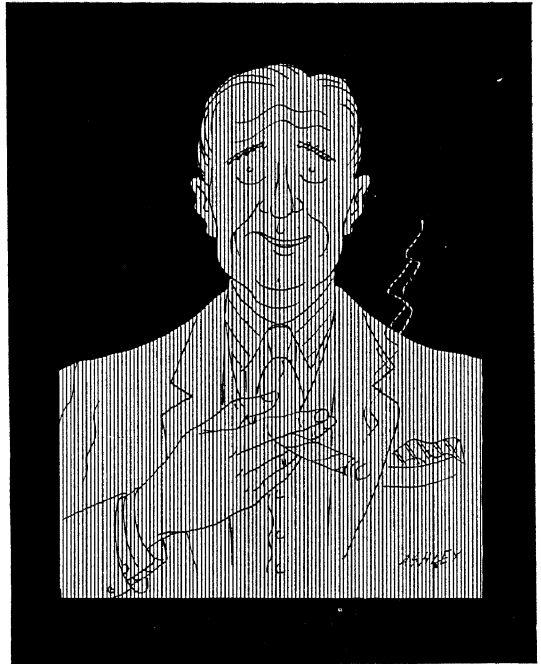
(1) Complete reverse of original, black lines on white, to white lines on black.



(4) Figure reversed, to white lines on black, face and hand left as original drawing.



(2) Half the drawing as original, black lines on white, the other half reversed white lines on black



(3) Drawing of man as original, with tint No. 7 added, background reversed to black



(5) Drawing of man reversed, white lines on black, background cut away



(6) Complete reverse of the shaded drawing to white lines on black

Line drawing toned with washes (half-tone block)



60 Screen for newspaper reproduction

120 Screen for magazine reproduction

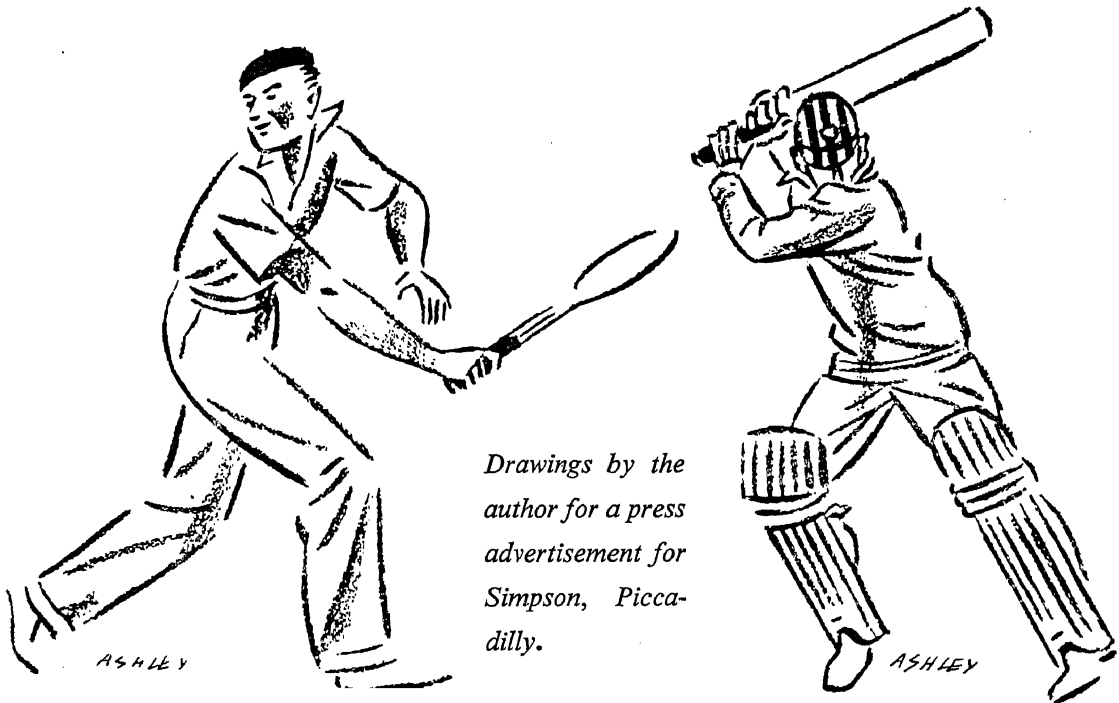
We now come to a type of drawing which, because it has washes introduced into it, requires half-tone reproduction.

This style of drawing naturally loses more of its detail when reproduced for newspaper printing than for magazine printing, as is shown by the two separate blocks placed together above (one 60 screen and the other 120). Nevertheless, the drawing shown is so constructed that the loss of detail does not materially mar its effect.

Had the drawing been done with the expression dependent on subtle washes and shadows instead of a clean linear contour, the coarse screen would have so broken up the detail that the result would have been unintelligible.

The block above is from a drawing by the author from a press advertisement for Larranaga Havana cigars

Brush drawings (line block)



Brush drawing (half-tone block)

If a brush with black paint is dragged on fairly coarse paper (cart-ridge is quite suitable) so that there is a definite separation between the paint and white parts of the paper showing in the interstices of the drag, a successful line block can be made. The blockmaker can help out the result if the line shows a tendency to fill up (as will be seen in the two reproductions above), by judicious hand-engraving on the block itself. The sailor at right is a half-tone, thus making sure that any nuances from black to grey are not lost, reproducing the lighter tones that thinning of paint in the original conveyed.



Drawing by the author from a press advertisement for The Brewers' Society

Combination line and half-tone blocks

Original effects On the opposite page Lester Beall demonstrates the wonderfully dramatic effect which can be obtained by combining a line drawing with a photograph. Graphic experiments of this kind open up new avenues of expression to the commercial artist. This composition, combining the realistic conviction of the photograph offset by the imaginative use of the artist's line, foreshadows the possible development of an entirely new kind of graphic expression.

Reproduction A design of this kind is easily reproduced. The blockmaker makes a line negative of the line part, a half-tone screen negative of the tone part and strips the two together. The double negative is then printed down on to the metal and etched in the ordinary way—this result is called a combination line and tone block.

Contrast In the drawing below the grey lines are in half-tone; while the accents in black, done by "dragging" the brush, are reproduced in line without the use of the half-tone screen. This combination block brings out the contrast of texture more definitely than if the whole reproduction had been in half-tone alone.

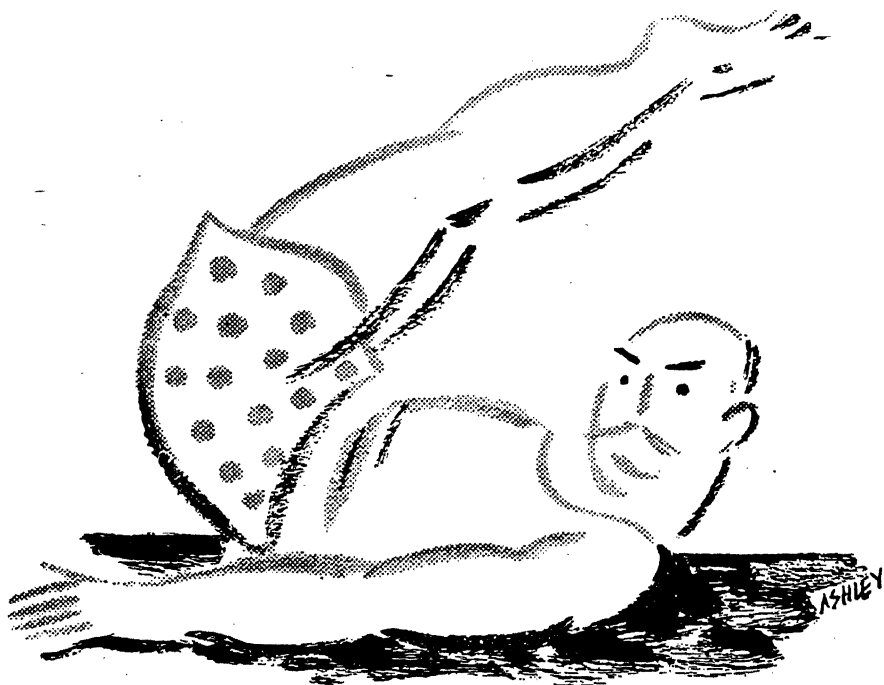


Illustration by the author from a press advertisement for Eno's 'Fruit Salt'

The scraper-board

What it is The scraper-board is the name given to a thickish piece of paper coated in manufacture with a surface of chalk, which looks like a thin white enamel. The advantage of this paper is that one can paint on it with black ink and with the use of a scalpel knife or sharp penknife, white lines can then be scratched across the part covered with black ink. This is because the ink stays on the surface of the chalk coating, and when the knife scratches a little of the surface away it reveals the chalk coating beneath. You cannot do much scraping over the same place, because in time you get right through the chalk coating to the paper backing.

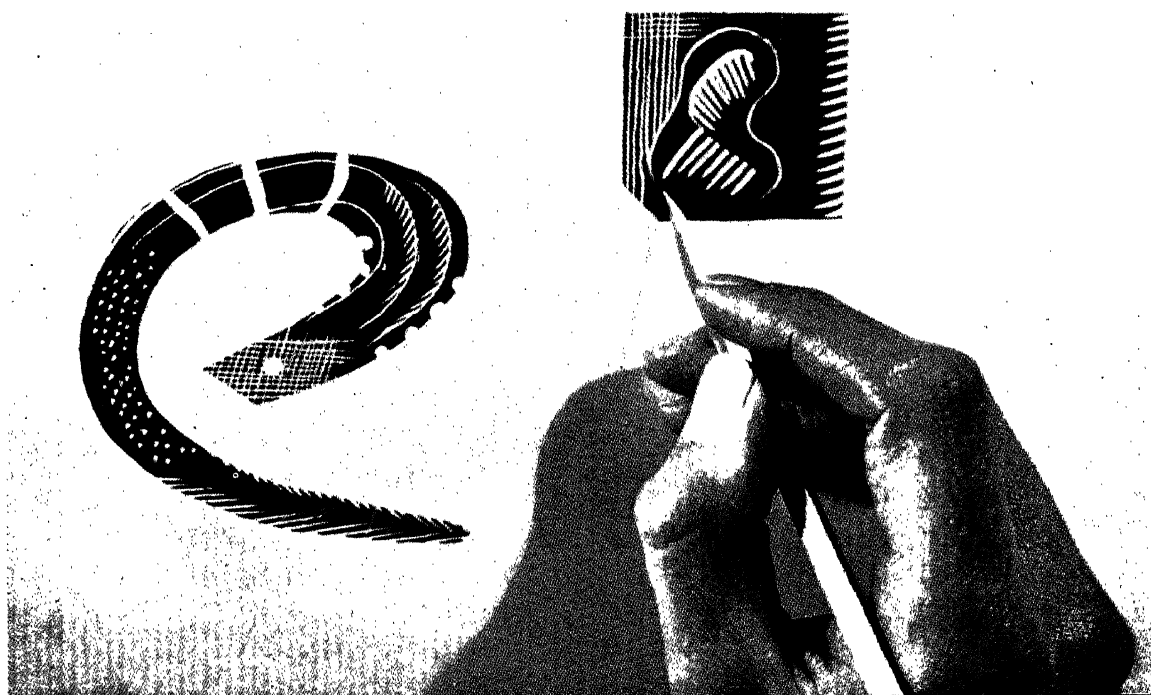
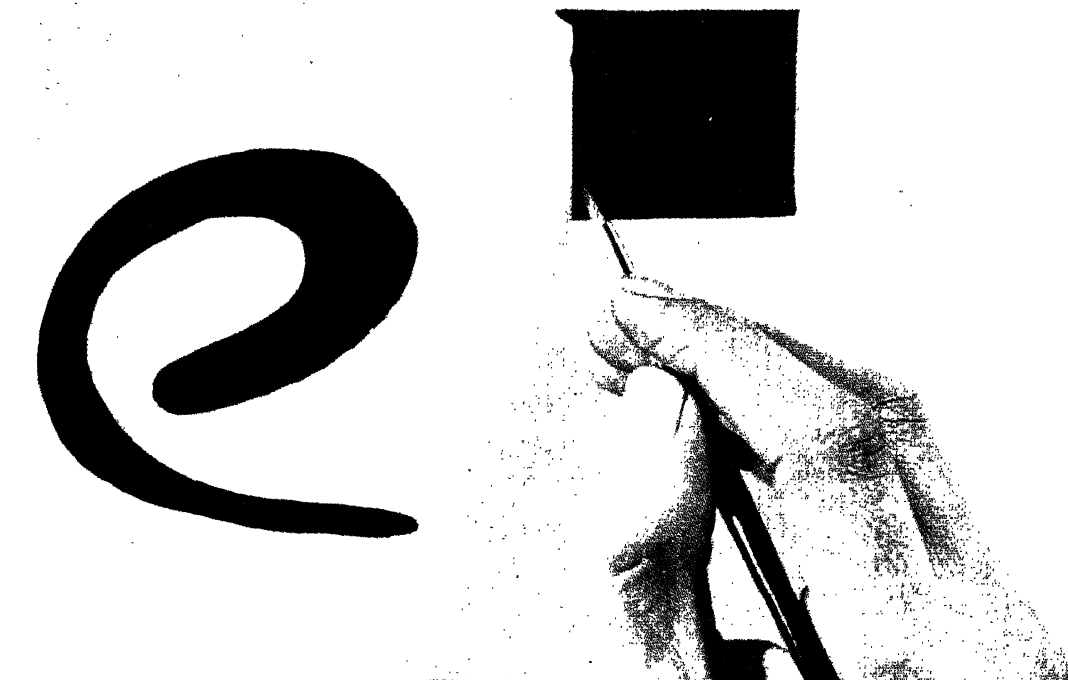
Pen lines It is possible to draw a pen line on to a scraper-board, but it must be done rather delicately, owing to the danger of the point of the pen scratching the chalk surface and the ink getting mixed up with the fine powder produced by the scratch.

Wood-cut effect The chief interest of the scraper-board lies in the fact that the incisive white and black lines of a wood engraving can be got without any of the difficulties and complications of actually cutting the wood, particularly as nowadays wood-blocks are not used in the modern printing press.

If one did do a woodcut, a metal-block would be made photographically from a print taken off your wood-block. The scraper-board is therefore a short cut to woodcut effects. It is for this purpose that it is mainly used. It can be said, however, from a purist's point of view, that its use is unsound since its merits lie in its ability to imitate a technique that more properly belongs to another medium.

Great care should be taken in handling the board because, if it gets bent, the chalk surface cracks. Always mount it on thick card.

Variety of boards Scraper-boards can be had from any artist's colourman in white and in various shades of grey. The grey is represented by thousands of black dots, like a half-tone screen. By adding black and scraping either on the black or the grey one can get a combined half-tone and wood-cut effect on the same surface. The fact that the tone is already in dot form means that a line block can be made.



How to use the scraper-board



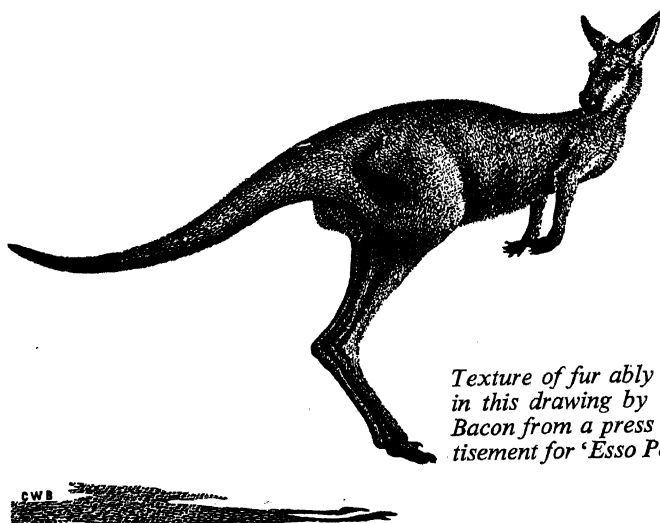
Scraper-board examples

*Drawing by T. L. Poulton
(Courtesy of the B.B.C.)*

Although I referred in the preceding comment on the scraper-board to its main use in imitating woodcut effects, I haven't illustrated that point because all my readers must be perfectly familiar with what the average woodcut looks like. However, there is another way of using the scraper-board to get effects which it would be very difficult to get by any other means. These drawings exhibit the great variety of texture and shading possible, also a delicacy of line in delineation which can only be got by careful workmanship. One of the great merits of the scraper-board drawing from a commercial point of view lies in the fact that it prints cleanly and crisply and, owing to the way the tone values can be handled, a strong rich result is obtained.



*A superb example of technical virtuosity with scraper-board
This drawing is by H. G. Collett and was used in a campaign in the architectural press for
Duresco Paints*



*Texture of fur ably shown
in this drawing by C. W.
Bacon from a press advertisement for 'Esso Petrols'*

Book illustration versus press advertising designs



Book illustration
by W. A. Dwiggins,
from "Tales" by E. A. Poe
(The Lakeside Press, Chicago)

Advertising design

In press advertising the aim should be to make the advertisement that is, the drawing must be considered in relation to the written and display elements, so as to produce a unity. Such an advertisement has more chance of holding its own in competition with the editorial and other advertisement matter; thus catching and retaining the attention of the reader, so that its message is grasped in its entirety.

Ideal artist

The ideal advertising artist, therefore, should have a lively appreciation of effective type display and be able to order his composition so as to assist the art director in the construction of the whole advertisement.

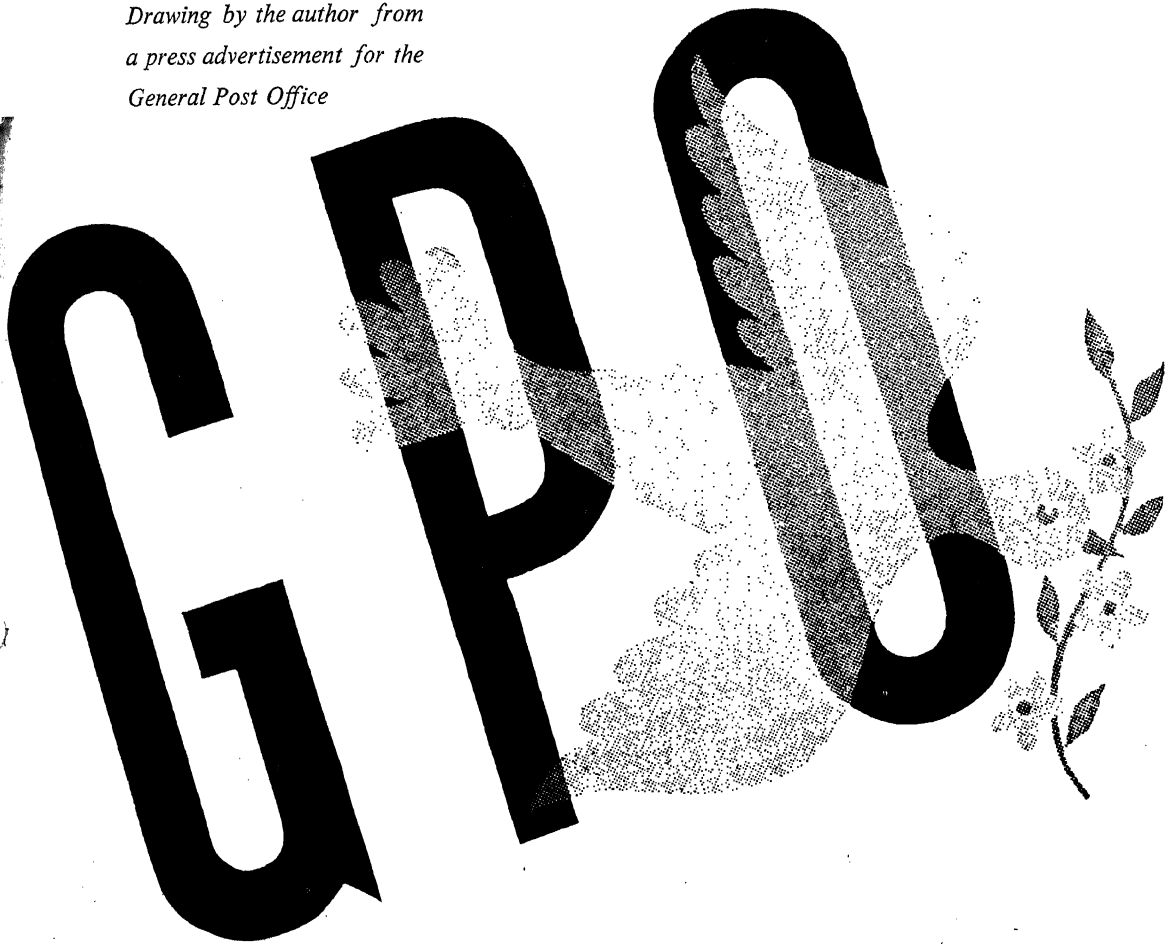
Book illustration

The book illustrator, on the other hand, need rarely concern himself overmuch with the make-up of the book. Usually his work will have a whole page to itself, so that apart from preserving a certain consistency of technique throughout his illustrations, his only considerations are personal ones concerning the individual composition of his drawings in relation to the size of the page of the book he is given to illustrate.

When a book is decorated rather than illustrated—by the use of *Book decoration* head pieces, i.e., drawings to start off each chapter, and tail pieces, i.e., little drawings to end each chapter, or thumb-nail drawings set amongst the text, the artist must consider the typographical make-up of the book in order to achieve a harmonious balance between the weight of his drawing in relation to the weight of the type matter.

The same thing applies to magazine illustrating. The make-up of the magazine can adjust itself easily to the fitting together of the text and drawings, because, like the book, the reader buys the magazine to read, and the responsibility per page of tempting him optically to read is less great than that of the advertisement, because, after all, people don't buy the daily newspaper to read the advertisements. *Magazine illustration*

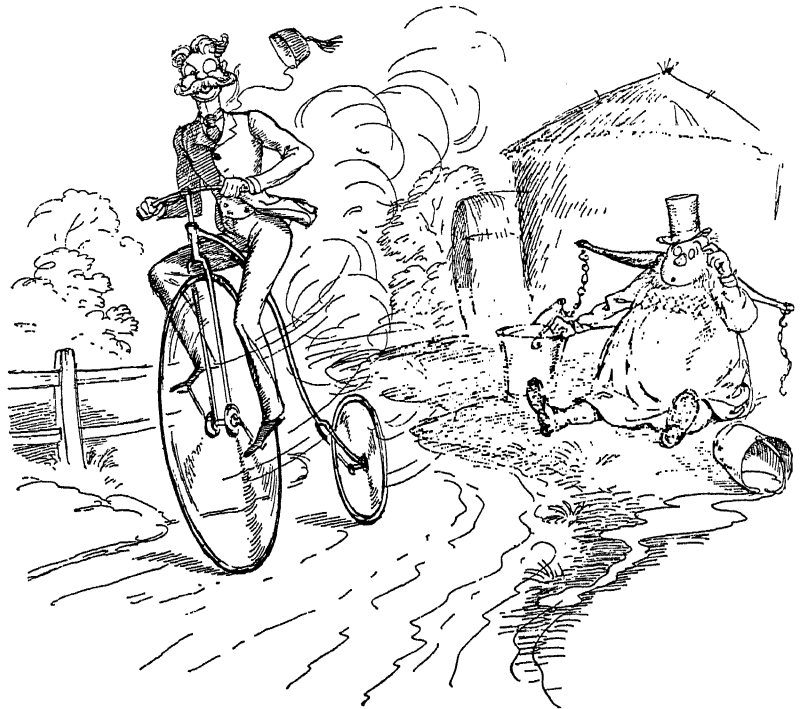
*Drawing by the author from
a press advertisement for the
General Post Office*





*Illustration
from "Green Outside"
by Elizabeth Godley*

*(Courtesy of the author
and Chatto & Windus)*



*Illustration from
press advertisement
for Guinness*

*The distinguished book illustrator Rex Whistler
shows us how successfully he works in both fields*

Another essential difference between book illustrating and press-advertisement drawing is, that provided the book illustration conforms roughly with the general spirit of the book, it is in essence an extra in that the book would be complete and perfectly understandable without the illustrations. But in press advertising the drawing not only plays a big part in attracting the attention of the reader, but it is invariably an integral part of the theme and argument of the advertisement. Advertising space is expensive, and therefore restricted. There is not the time to lead the reader along and gradually unfold one's meaning as in a book. The advertisement has to produce short cuts to the reader's understanding, so that a lot of ground can be covered in a restricted space. The drawing in an advertisement has therefore to play a double part—the first consideration is that it should be designed to attract the eye, the second is that its point should be easily grasped.

Book illustrations additional to story

Therefore, the advertising artist is searching always to find dramatic, forceful, and, if possible, unusual graphic ideas, so that the two birds—attracting attention and helping to express the theme of the advertisement—are killed with the one stone.

Advertising illustration part of story

Yet another difference is a technical one. The newspapers are printed on cheap, absorbent paper and at a terrific rate—many papers print over two million copies in one night—so that little attention can be paid to subtleties of reproduction. If drawings are not clean-cut designs, boldly produced, they stand little chance of being more than a smudge in the following morning's paper! Whereas books and magazines are printed on much better paper, and are not produced daily in large quantities. Much more time and consideration can therefore be given to the printing and reproduction of delicate detail and subtleties of technique in their illustrations.

Printing problems

It can be said that all drawings done for press advertising are reproducible for book or magazine illustrations—but all drawings done for book or magazine are not necessarily reproducible in the newspaper.

Interchangeability

From the foregoing it will be seen that the technical limitations imposed upon the artist drawing for advertising are much more severe than those imposed upon the book or magazine illustrator. But, on the other hand the book illustrator must have a more highly developed imaginative sensibility, if he is to interpret successfully the mood and intentions of the author.

Limitations

The use of line as applied to posters

Attention value

A. Mouron Cassandre, I believe, had a theory (of which the poster reproduced is a very good demonstration) based on the attention value of white lines on a dark ground.

He evolved this theory from the fact that habits formed unconsciously in childhood persist throughout our lives.

School memories

During our most impressionable years, most of us have had to concentrate on the school blackboard with its large writing or simple diagrams, chalked on its surface by the master. The very fact that it was the master who did the chalking in the process of his teaching, still inclines us in adult life to regard designs, reminiscent of this blackboard system of imparting knowledge as important, and likely to contain information that will be of use to us.

So much for the psychological aspect. On the practical side we can say that the eye is trained in childhood to absorb simplified conventional diagrams such as are used in teaching from a blackboard, because they must be seen by the whole class.

Simplification

You will see on the opposite page that Cassandre, by great simplification of the component parts of his message, has produced a design, the significance of which is easily grasped by the most casual observer. A very important point to be borne in mind by all artists who wish to make successful posters.

Construction

Notice the vigorous geometric construction of the head of the man, how the diagrammatic use of the straight lines not only simplifies the form of the head, but continues the vertical strip of colour behind the cap—thus completing the underlying structure of a Greek column of which the shoulders of the man form the base. This columnar formation not only gives strength to the design, but at the same time helps to evoke the sensation of masculinity in association with the article advertised.

Line is very often used by poster designers to strengthen the contours of forms that already exist in colour—but in this example the line is itself the dominating element in the design.

Study

Toulouse-Lautrec, the Beggarstaff brothers—Carlu—McKnight-Kauffer—Loupot and others used line successfully in many of their posters—any examples of their work the student can procure will repay careful study.*

*“Modern Publicity” includes many reproductions of posters by these and many other famous poster designers.

GRANDSPORT

LA
CASQUETTE
ADOPTÉE PAR LES CHAMPIONS



Poster by A. M. Cassandre for Grand Sport Caps

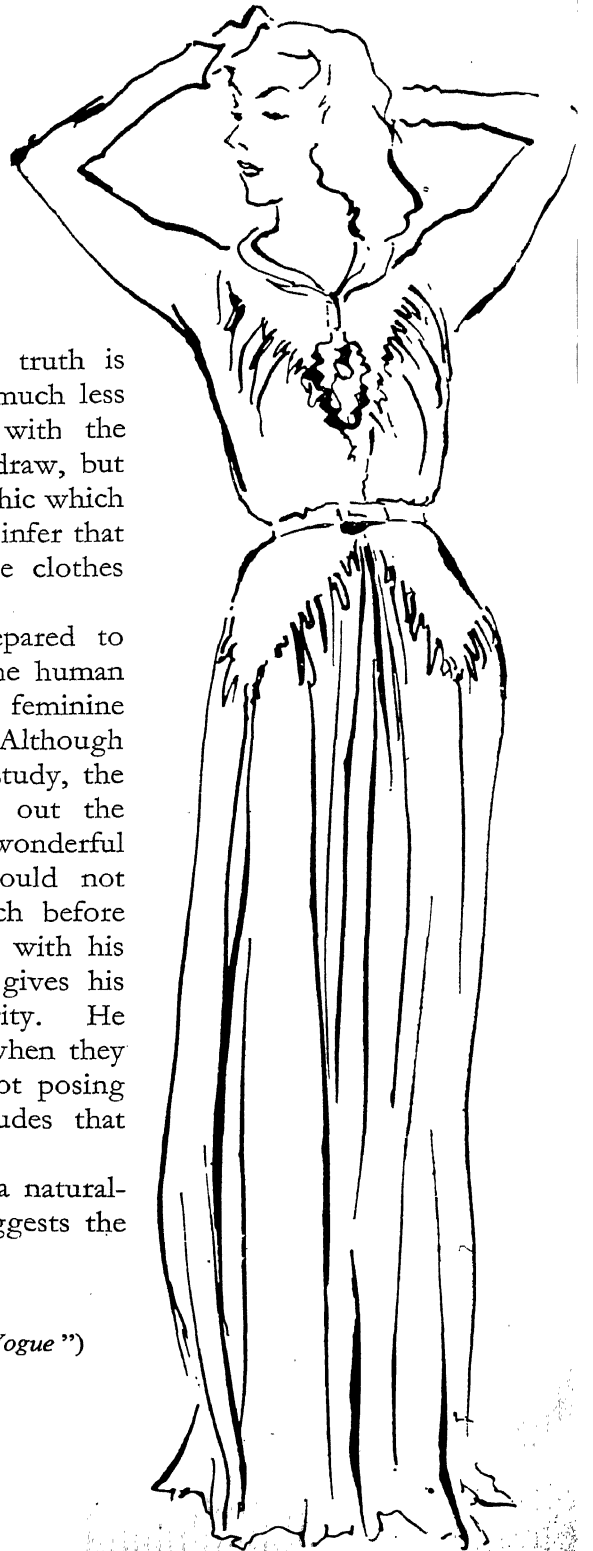
*Authoritative effect of white lines on black—because
of memories of blackboard teaching in childhood*

The use of line in fashion drawing

The fashion artist must realise that truth is not only stranger than fiction but often much less attractive. He is not concerned only with the appearance of the clothes he is given to draw, but with putting down on paper a concept of chic which will encourage the person looking at it to infer that the elegance depicted is the result of the clothes shown.

To do this the artist must be prepared to depart from the natural proportions of the human figure. Notice how Eric elongates the feminine form to accentuate the line of the clothes. Although Eric's work is the result of very careful study, the apparent spontaneity of the line helps out the impression that he was so excited by the wonderful appearance of these women that he could not resist the temptation to dash off a sketch before they moved away. This quality, coupled with his choice of unconventional poses is what gives his work its conviction and fashion authority. He appears to get his women "off guard" when they are just being gracefully feminine, and not posing self-consciously in the very stilted attitudes that mannequins tend to take up.

This choice of pose, not only gives a naturalness and charm to his figures, it also suggests the essential wearability of the clothes.



Illustrations by Carl Erickson. (Courtesy of "Vogue")



*Carl Erickson acknowledged by the world
as the master of fashion portrayal*

Quality and sensibility of line

Rhythm Although Foujita is a painter and does not concern himself at all with the problems of working for reproduction, the sketch I have reproduced opposite should not be missed out of any book concerned with drawing in line. Although his composition is concerned ostensibly with portraying the contrast between the modern western Japanese girl and her more traditional sister, it is in actuality a poem of rhythmic line composition and lends itself admirably to all forms of reproduction.

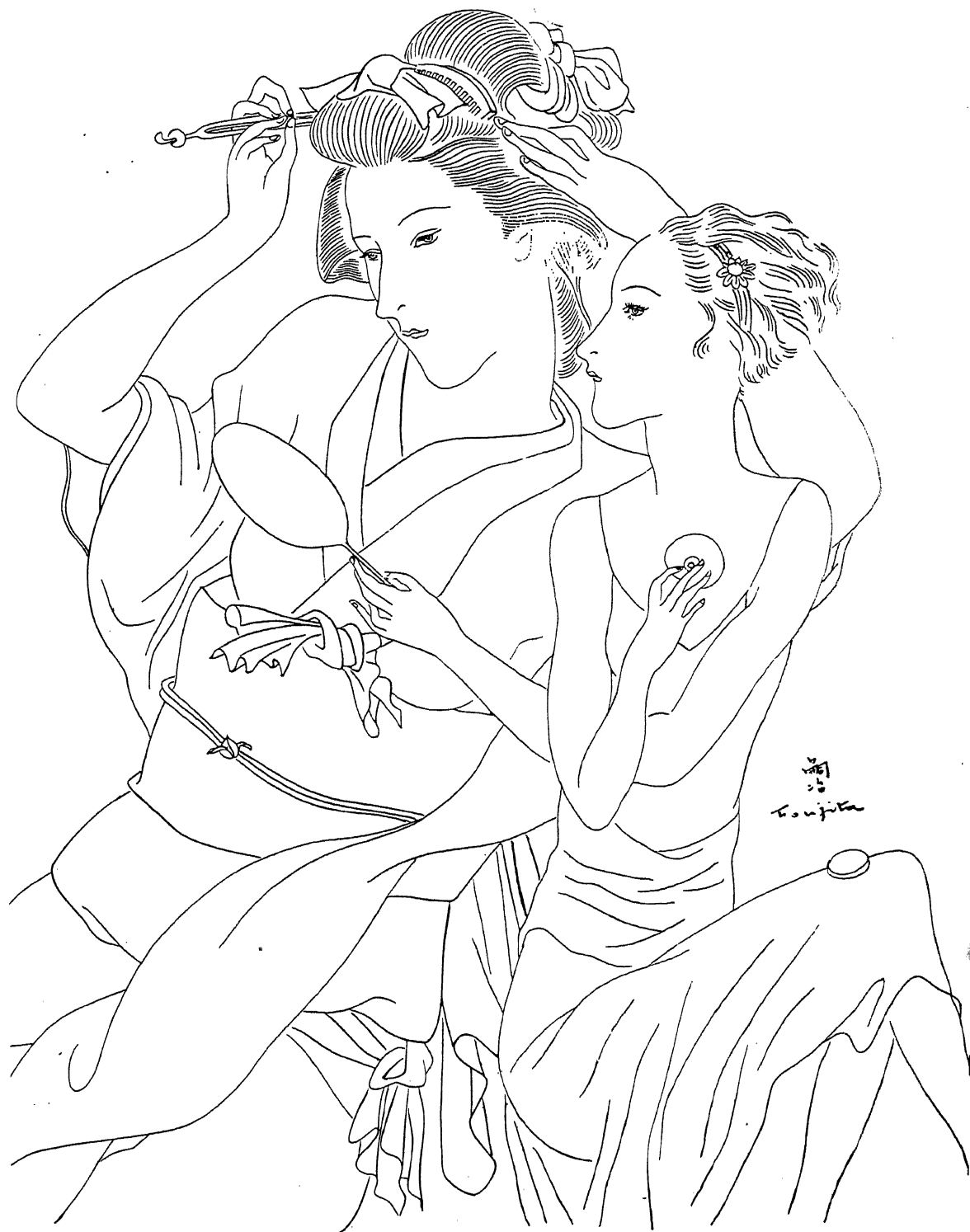
A little study of this drawing will do more to explain to the student what is meant by sensibility of line than would pages of text.

In this drawing Foujita achieves a flowing line without any noticeable variation in its weight—yet there is nothing tentative or uncertain in its direction.

Design As the drawing can be regarded as a linear composition, based on the natural proportions of the human body, it is interesting to find that it is out of drawing in one or two places—noticeably the kink in the upper part of the right arm of the girl on the left—also the index finger of the hand on the same arm putting the comb in her hair—yet this slight inconsistency in no way mars the effect of the design as a whole, because the observer is made to feel that the quality and *raison d'être* of the drawing does not lie in Foujita's realism, but in a beautiful synthesis of lines which sparkle and glitter like a highly polished diamond. The incidental meaning of the forms they enclose seems relatively unimportant.

His subject matter is simply a point of departure, giving him the material for a beautiful composition.

Drawing opposite by Foujita. (Courtesy of "Vogue")



"A poem of rhythmic line composition"

Form and metaphor

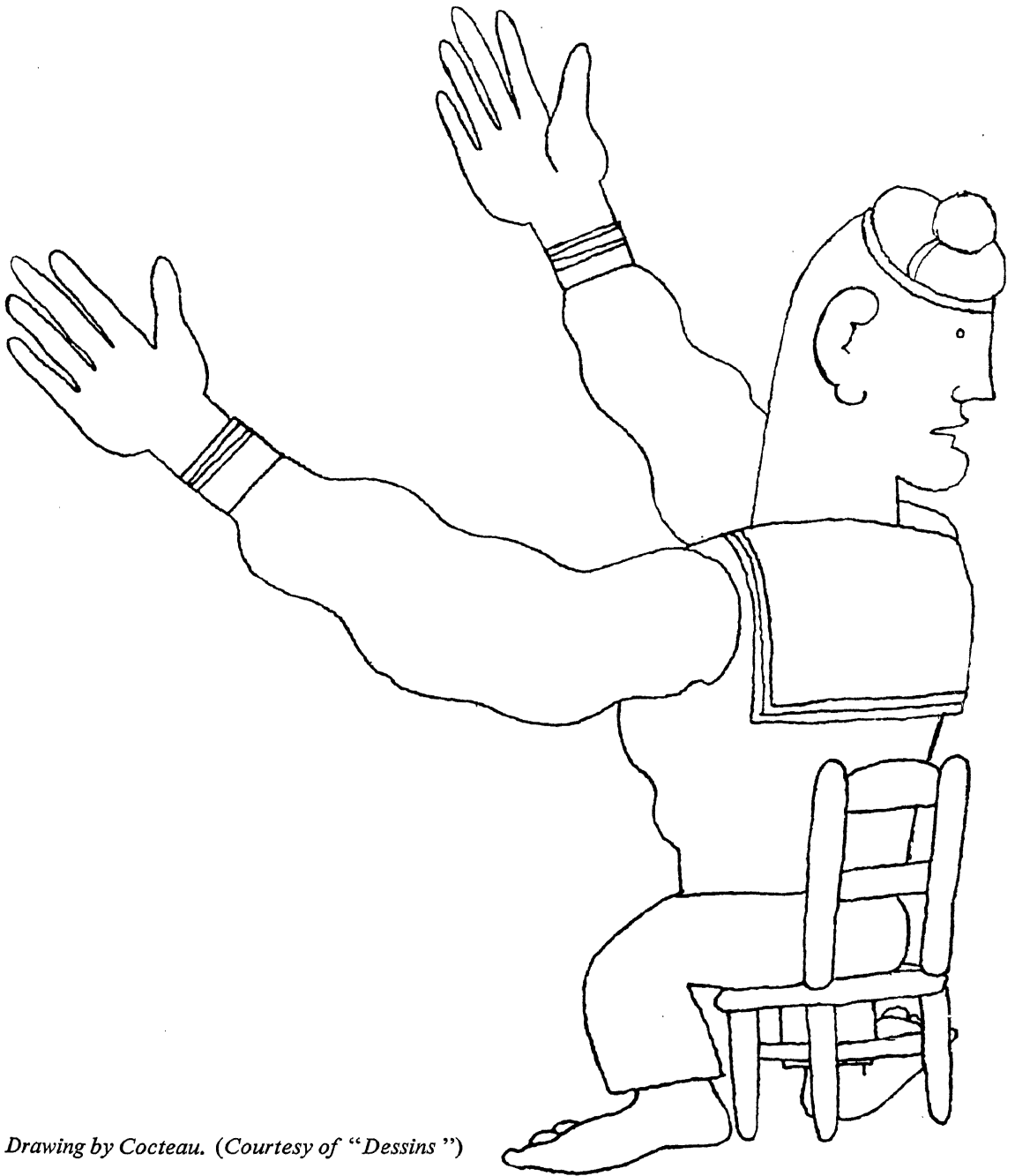
Again, like Foujita, Jean Cocteau, one of whose drawings I have shown opposite, is not primarily working for reproduction, although from a draughtsman's point of view he is amply equipped to do so with success.

The problem His rendering of the French sailor gives one a very good example in line of the age-old problem of the relation of form and metaphor in a composition. The metaphor can be styled the meaning in terms of representation, and the form is the vehicle by which that meaning is presented. The metaphor is that point of contact with what we rather loosely call reality, but the form is the artist's own property and it is his handling of the one in relation to the other that determines the quality of our reaction to his work !

Exaggeration of forms Now, in Cocteau's drawing opposite, it is quite obvious that as far as representing the normal proportions of the human form it is very wide of the mark. Clearly he is not concerned with the purely realistic attributes of the sailor he is drawing. By exaggerating some parts of the figure in relation to the whole, a rhythm and balance has been achieved which seems to carry its own conviction through some strange vision of the artist. It is this reorientation of the formal relationship of the parts that rivets our attention and carries our emotions along a new path discovered for us by the artist.

Motive When an artist sits down to make a sketch, particularly if he is drawing for commerce, he invariably has some ulterior motive. He is not just showing how realistically he can draw some given object, but is usually concerned in expressing an idea in a forceful way. To that end, therefore, appearances become conditioned by the matrix of his own invention. All forms of exaggeration are legitimate. Cocteau has not only exaggerated the size of the arms and hands in relation to the figure to bring out some meaning he's concerned with in his drawing, but has drawn them in such a way that they set up a relation of forms that is also aesthetically convincing. So much so that even without knowing the meaning—or reason why he did the drawing—the forms are so placed that they convey an inevitable conviction of their own. This gives his drawing the quality of a work of art.

Human camera No artist's work can have any real significance if this formal aspect of his expression is ignored. A drawing that depends entirely on its metaphor for its existence, must of necessity be classed in a lower grade of expression—because the artist is, as it were, only making a human camera of himself !



Drawing by Cocteau. (Courtesy of "Dessins")

*"A good example in line of the age-old problem of
the relation of form and metaphor in a composition"*

In search of style

Ambition To draw with style is naturally the student's ambition. I think it will be helpful therefore to try and define this elusive quality.

Personality By style we mean surely the artist's power of imparting to his drawing some quality of his own personality. Mere competent draughtsmanship is not enough.

Recognition One of the surest means of acquiring style is to learn to recognize it in the work of other artists. Nearly every artist owes something to an early admiration for the work of some established master. It is often this conscious emulation which inspires him to make the effort to improve his own work.

Technique Again style must not be confused with technique, although technique is an integral part of style. We all know that if two artists draw exactly the same subject, using exactly the same materials, their drawings will be entirely different. If we could separate that difference we should be much nearer to understanding what style is.

Sincerity The truth is that a student is constantly thinking of the impression he is making, and hoping to make a better one than he knows he deserves. This is understandable, but real style only comes with sincerity.

The true artist thinks continually of the matter of his work and is unconscious of the manner. He cannot think of a line without drawing it, and if he has thought with sincerity about what his line is meant to convey, he will draw it with conviction and force. It will have an inevitability about it, as though it were saying "I know where I am going, and no power on earth is going to interfere with me." That type of line, if it is consistent throughout an entire drawing, is what will give that drawing style. Being a sincere line it will be as individual to the artist as his own fingerprints.

Be natural Therefore, always draw the line that comes naturally to you. However undistinguished you may think it is to start with, the very fact that it is your own line makes it unique. So work away at it, and forego the temptation to make your drawing resemble the work of some other artist whom you admire. Be bold enough to believe in your own expression. Only time and practice will perfect that line and perhaps make it famous. Any other approach to finding a style for yourself will be abortive and will only result in making your work pretentious and shallow.

Some Outstanding Artists

*Accompanied by a short analysis
of their work*

Of the hundreds of successful and talented artists drawing for *Variety* reproduction to-day, space permits me to show examples of only a few in the following pages. I have nevertheless collected enough, I hope, to demonstrate the variety of forms the line-approach can take.

I say "line-approach" because line is the subject of this book, *Line-approach* and the reader at a first glance through the following pages may be surprised at finding many examples other than black lines on white paper.

Nevertheless, all of them are line drawings basically. The treat- *Treatment* ment of the line, whether in pen, pencil, or brush, by breaking and supporting it with tones and washes, does not alter the essentially linear approach. This will be seen at once by a close study of these reproductions.

In demonstrating the great variety of styles which are possible *Technique* I have chosen examples from all fields of expression, some from artists' sketch books, but mostly from books, magazines and advertisements. This covers all types of line drawing, serious, decorative, illustrative, fashion and humorous.

All the artists whose work is shown are outstandingly successful *Study* in their various fields. A careful study of their work will repay the student, and help him to decide wherein his own ability lies.

In the accompanying text I have done my best to analyse each *Analysis* example and point out wherein I think the secret of its success can be found.

André Masson

André Masson—well-known as one of the foremost surrealist painters—can be said to be exploring throughout his work the graphic relationships between the forms seen in the unconscious of the mind (the dream life) with the forms seen objectively in life.

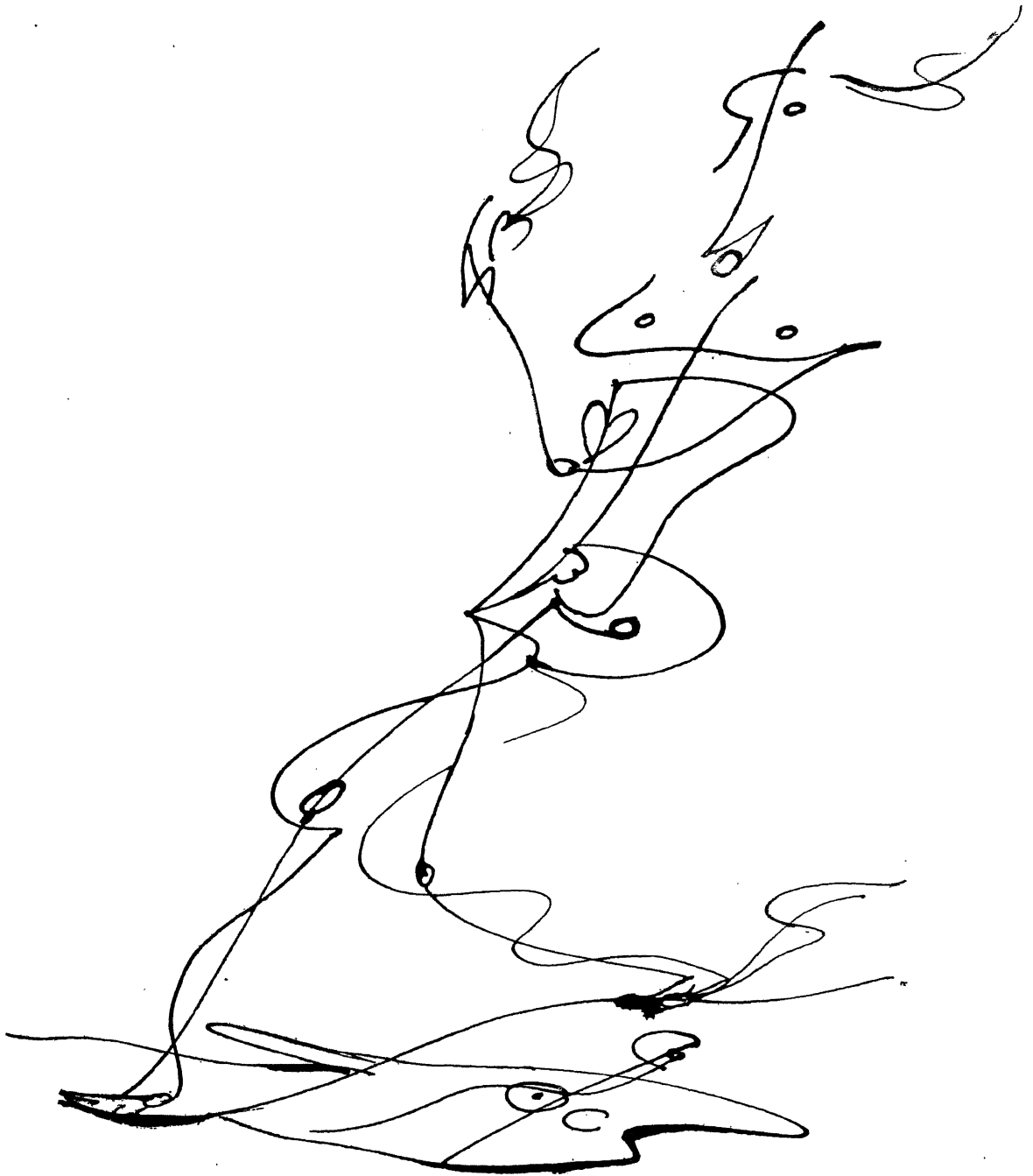
We all know of the faculty of being able to see, as it were, with the mind's eye*. The images seen thus, although borrowed from the external world, are so altered by the thought interpretation put upon them that they seem to be, as it were, visual inventions of our own.

It's the artist who is supposed to have the faculty of combining his sensory experience with his mental vision, in such a way that he can create on paper a unity which is a compound of life and himself.

It is from this point of view that I want the student to study the drawing on the opposite page. It is a direct pen drawing combining great fluency of line with a powerful sense of the movement and poise of the human figure. The result is a synthesis of free-flowing lines which have an independent life of their own.

The emotion we get in looking at this drawing is somewhat akin to our sensations when listening to music—that is, it is an experience that cannot be rationalised entirely, as it varies with the aesthetic appreciation of each observer. Just as there are people who have no ear for the music of Schönberg's "Gurre-Lieder," so there are many people who have no eye for such a linear composition as this drawing of Masson's. Yet it is the ability to appreciate qualities in an experimental abstraction of this kind that helps the commercial artist to improve his sensibility which, indirectly of course, affects the quality of his own work.

*There are some very interesting passages on this subject of mental imagery in a book by Francis Galton, called "Inquiries into the Human Faculty." This makes invaluable reading for all those desirous of acquiring a greater understanding of how their minds work, and how it is that we get ideas at all. It is published by Dents in their "Everyman" series.



"A synthesis of free flowing lines which have an independent life of their own."

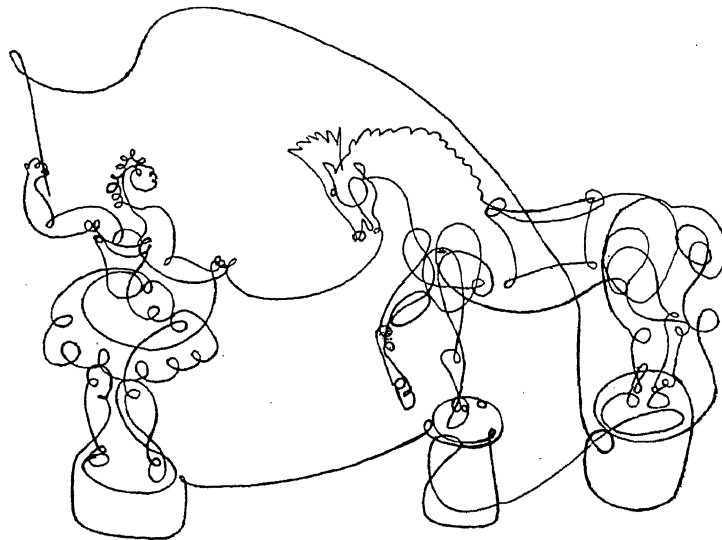
Picasso

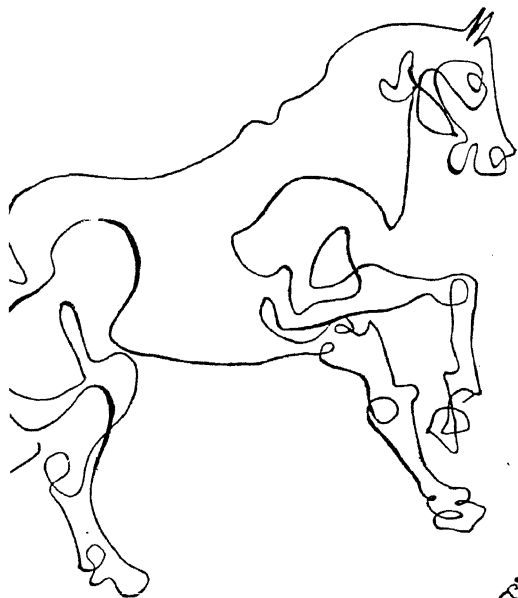
These delightful little poems in line are an excellent example of Picasso's dexterity with a pen. Each one was drawn in a continuous line without lifting the pen from the paper.

Such an exercise is invaluable for training one's mind to see clearly on paper what one intends to draw—and to hold the picture there all the time one is drawing it. You will see, if you try, that holding the picture in the mind is only half the difficulty, even then. The problem is not only one of keeping the parts in rhythmic relation to each other, but of inventing a way of keeping one's line free to go on to the next part. You will find that you have a tendency to complete details so that you cannot proceed. By studying the accompanying drawings you will see in what a masterly way these difficulties have been overcome.

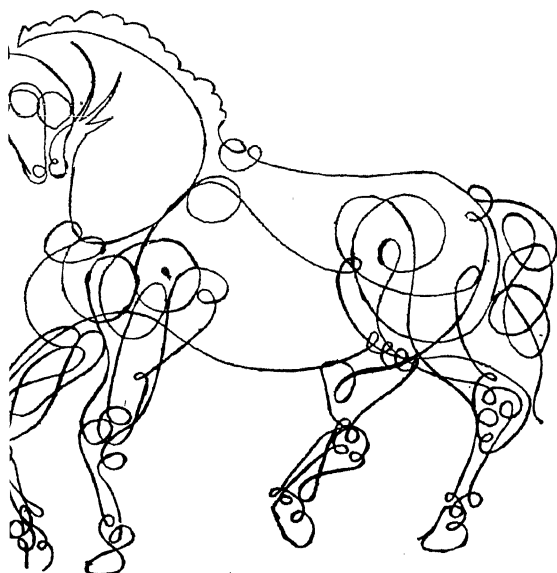
Picasso has not only succeeded admirably in conveying the spirit of his subjects, but he has preserved throughout an exceedingly beautiful and fluid line. The horses, in particular, have a movement and vitality which are amazing. It makes one wonder whether so-called realism in drawing is as realistic as it is made out to be!

This sketch of Picasso's is an excellent example of how much can be learned by the student of commercial art from apparently casual work done by a great master—with no ulterior motive in mind—but in a mood to experiment.





*Examples of continuous line showing
amazing movement and vitality*



Picasso

In the reproduction on the opposite page, apparently inconsequential blobs, spatters, and scribble have produced a head of great sensibility. Such freedom from conscious technique should be an encouragement to the artist drawing in line for commerce—who in his desire for effective reproduction tends very often to get his drawings too tight and finished-looking—thereby missing the spontaneity and force inherent in this head of Picasso's.

Again, we are confronted with the manner triumphing over the matter*—which should not be interpreted as being at the expense of the matter but on the contrary, as giving the matter more significance than it would have, had it been delineated apparently more carefully, but in a more commonplace technique.

Many advertisements using a photograph or a drawing of a head as a predominating element to catch the eye of the reader, would be enormously pointed up in dramatic power and interest if they contained drawings produced in the more loose and virile manner of Picasso's head opposite!

Propaganda in all its forms stands greatly in need of this more imaginative approach.

* See notes on form and metaphor, page 44



A head of great sensibility and dramatic power

Henry Moore

We are fortunate in being able to reproduce on the opposite page some preliminary sketches for sculpture by Henry Moore, who is regarded as the most important of the younger English sculptors.

These sketches, although viewed by Moore only as a means to an end, namely, as forms to be carved out of stone, demonstrate, nevertheless, a method of working which can be a great help to the student of drawing.

The extraordinary thing about them is that the wash is put in first and the pen line applied afterwards.

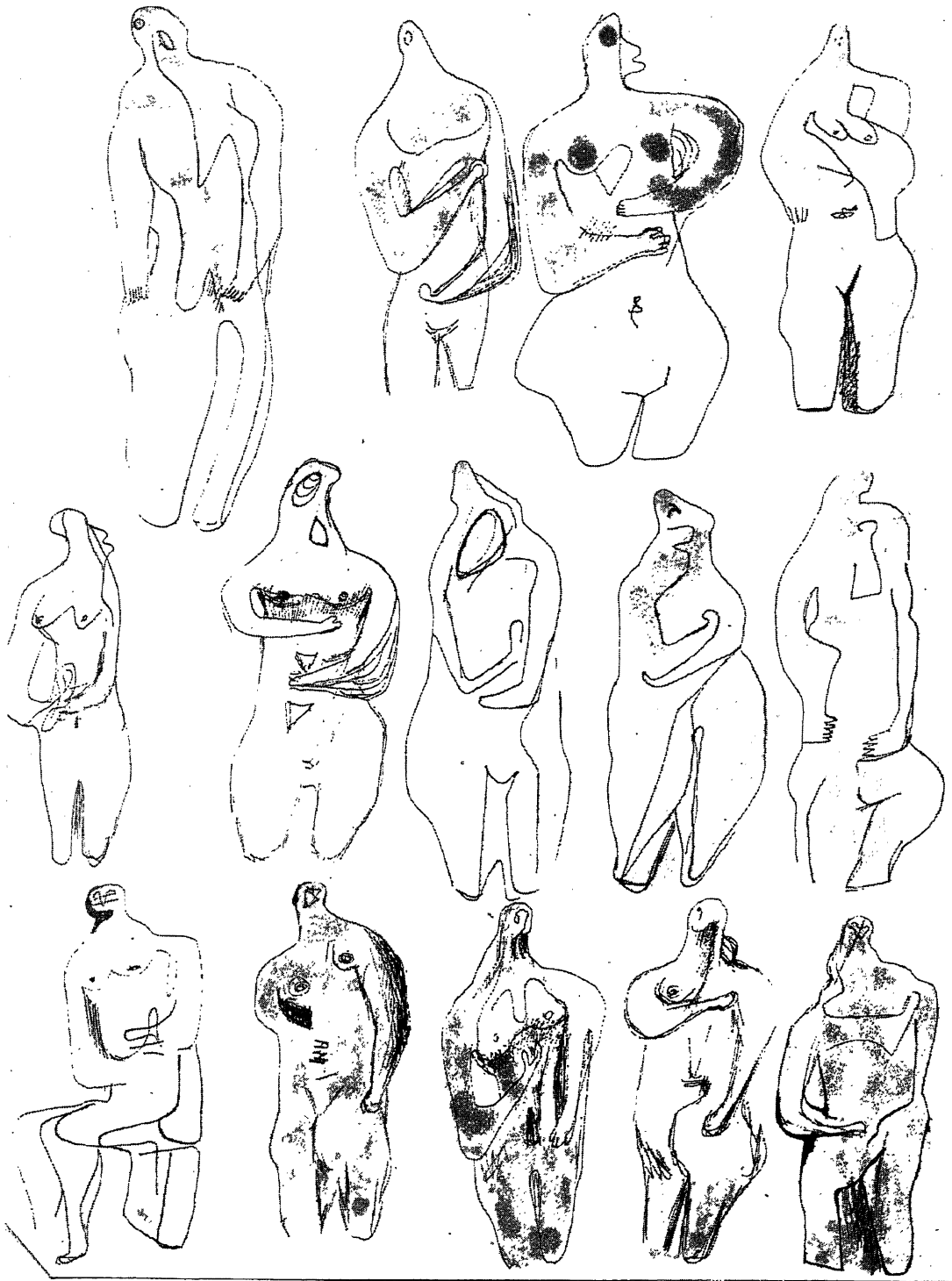
Now one of the problems of the artist in trying to establish a form, or mass on paper, is to surround it with lines in order to outline its shape. In doing this the form does not exist until all the lines are drawn in.

Moore works the other way round. He establishes rapidly with a wash some shapes on paper. These shapes though freely put down, are not entirely accidental, as nobody else would put them down quite in the same way—therefore they must represent in an intuitive way some part of his own personality and experience.

He puts these washes down in a very orderly fashion as can be seen from the illustration opposite, which is only a fragment reproduced from a much larger sheet covered with sketches in this manner.

This rapid way of establishing a series of tentative shapes with a brush gives him something to get his eye around, so to speak. Then with a pen he explores the forms these shapes suggest to him. In this way he outlines the contours so that the mass enclosed has rhythmic content. The particular shapes that Moore has conjured out of his washes do not concern us here, as they are, of course, personal to his own particular problem of translating the human form into stone. The principle, however, of his method of discovering and experimenting with formal relationships is of great interest to the student. Every artist, who is aware of the importance of a shape as a shape, will appreciate this method as a stimulating exercise in the possibilities of surprising new and interesting forms. Such a method is an invitation to experiment.

It is interesting to compare these studies with the sketch by André Masson on page 49. Whereas Moore is using his line to define the boundary of a mass, Masson's drawing suggests a mass by drawing its axis.



Henry Moore experiments with formal relationships.

E. McKnight Kauffer

The significance of the design opposite lies in the rhythmic interplay of the various parts. It is interesting also as showing a mixture of the asymmetric and the symmetric in composition. The decorative framework surrounding the figures is symmetric in construction—while the placing and attitudes of the figures themselves are asymmetric. It is this upsetting, as it were, of the balance in form, and the righting of it in weight, that gives the design poise and movement.

This drawing also shows the decorative use that can be made of two different weights of pen line. The main structures are delineated with a bold line, uniform in weight, while a thinner line is used as shading to imply form, and give depth and colour to the design. Also the way the shading is used creates an overall texture which balances the weight of the typescript of the book it appears in. A delicate visual equilibrium is set up between the text and the illustrations. The design becomes an embellishment of the page rather than a realistic illustration of the text.

In this connection I might quote F. J. Harvey Darton, who writes in "Modern Book Illustration in Great Britain and America" (published by "The Studio"): "Book illustration is no longer a pretty complement (and compliment) to an author's work. It is itself a branch of aesthetics, which, in a wide sense, includes the literary as well as the visual appeal. No longer does an illustrator sit down to draw a place or a person, or compose a set scene. He tries by his line or his colour, aided by the hundred modern devices of reproduction, to present the Absolute, or at least the almost timeless essence of what inspired the author. He goes to the author's conception of mankind and the world, rather than to the form in which that conception is expressed."

The geometric formality of Kauffer's composition and its stylised construction shows the heraldic conception behind the design. Depicting Adam and Eve before their castle, it becomes in essence the Coat of Arms of the world.



(Illustration from Burton's "Anatomy Melancholy" by courtesy of the "Nonesuch Press")
of Rhythmic interplay of various parts

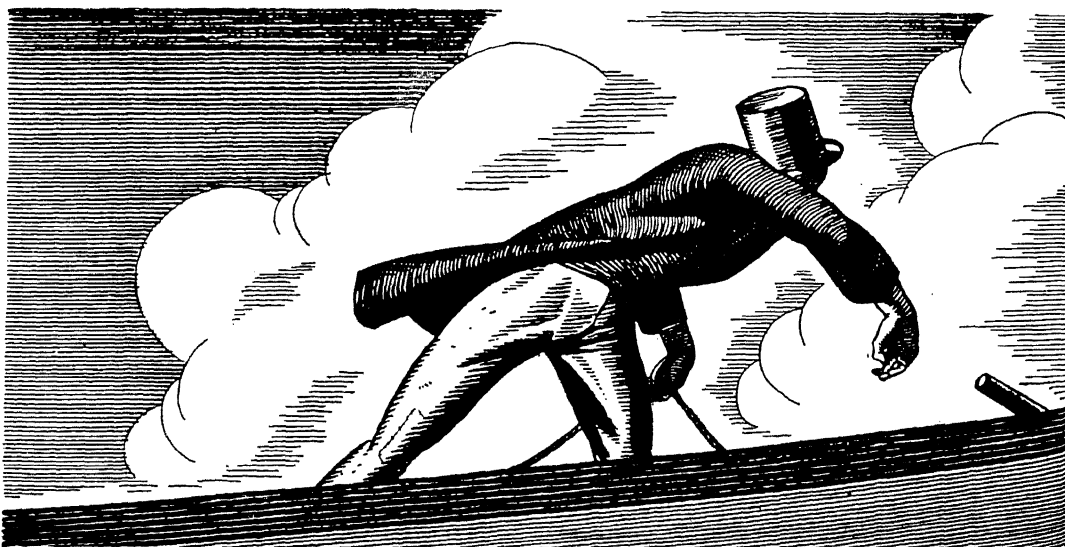
Rockwell Kent

Rockwell Kent can be regarded as one of the masters of contemporary book illustration in America.

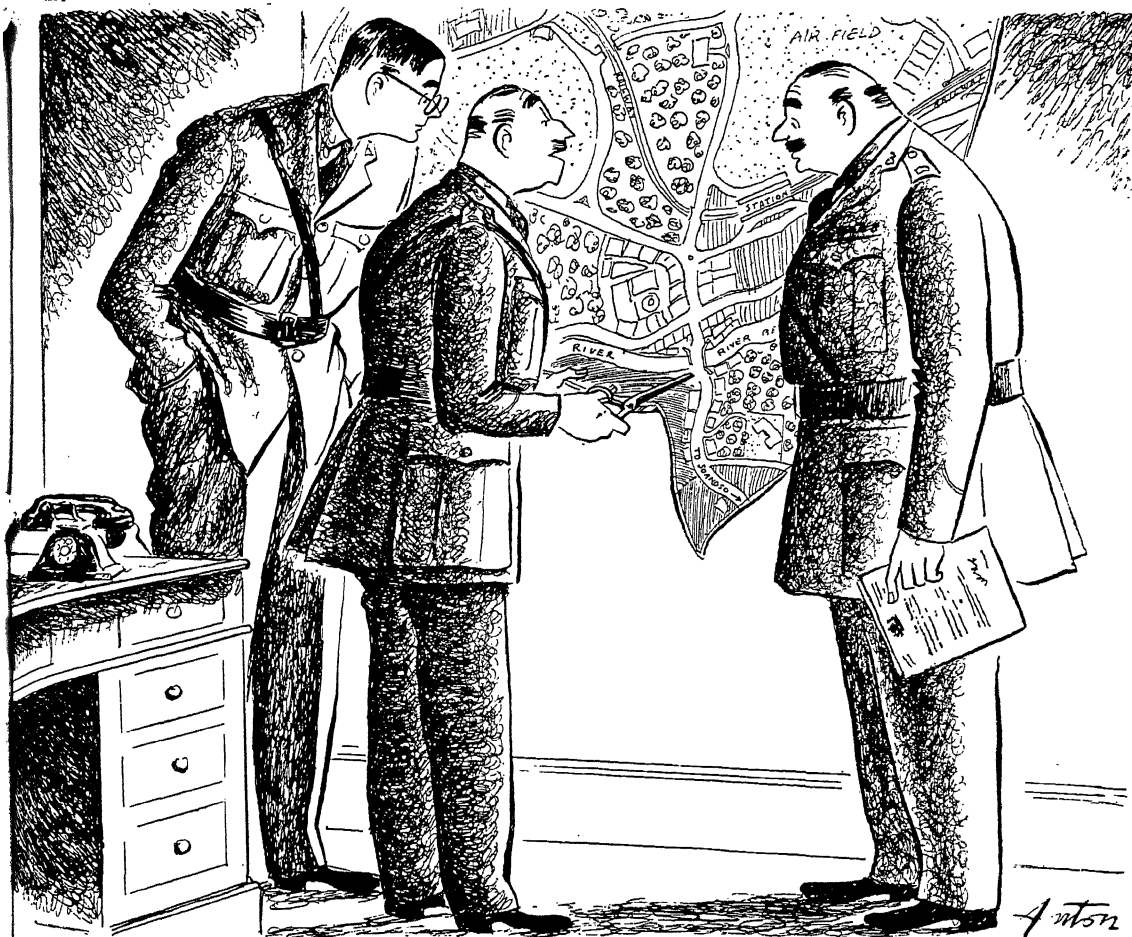
His pen work, as will be seen from the accompanying illustrations, is a strange mixture of the mechanical and the fluid. He appears to draw every line with the precision of a machine and yet his line does not lack sensibility. His forms are stylised and rigid—yet his characters seem to be warm and human.

I think it is this strange marriage of artifice and actuality that gives all his work its power and conviction.

Kent is also a wood-engraver, and the discipline imposed on him by the use of the various tools in doing wood-engraving is carried over into his pen drawings—and is the real basis of his technique. Notice the drawing below—how like a woodcut it is. In making a woodcut, it must be remembered, every line cut is a “high-light.” It may be this consciousness of digging out of the wood every part that isn’t to print—breaking up solids by high-lights—that gives Kent his interest in light and shade. So that even in drawing with a pen he seems to be more conscious of the whites he hasn’t drawn than of the blacks he has drawn.



Drawing from “ Moby Dick ” (The Lakeside Press, Chicago)



"My idea is to cut off their retreat right here."

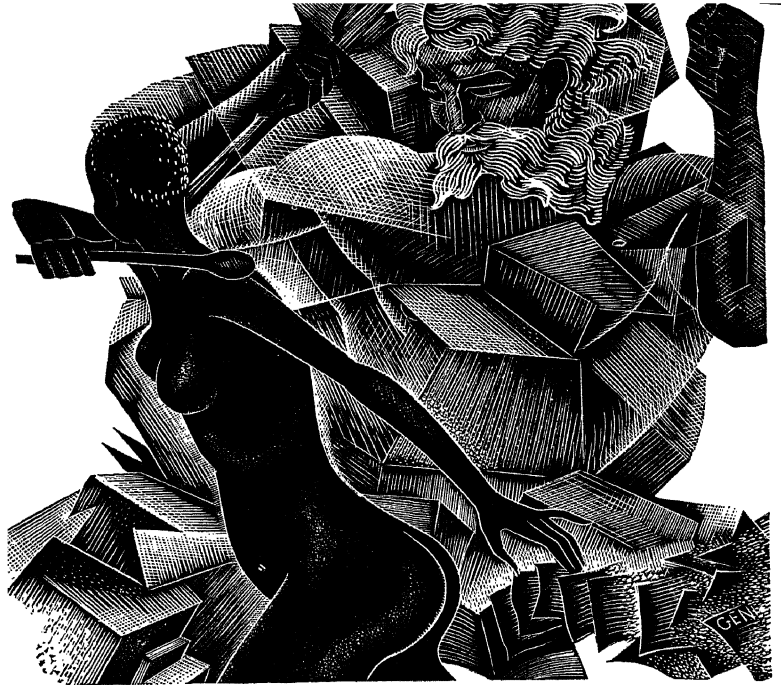
It is only within the last few years that the pages of various magazines have been enlivened by the work of Anton.

He brings to the joke drawing a new and very personal technique. His choice of types and stylised method of portrayal are in tune with the sophisticated outlook of to-day.

His original use of a circular form of "scribble" shading gives a feeling of roundness and solidity to his forms. He does not let a realistic conception of shadow control him, but bends his shading to his design purpose. For example, in his faces where the expression would be impeded, he leaves it off altogether, only using it to give interest and texture to his larger masses. In this way he knits his composition together with dramatic contrasts, imparting a feeling of gaiety and sunlit brilliancy to the whole drawing.

John Farleigh

*Illustration from
"Adventures of
the Black Girl
in her search
for God"
by Bernard Shaw
(Constable & Co., Ltd.)*



Although this beautiful drawing was executed on wood, and therefore more properly comes outside the scope of a book which is concerned with drawing for mechanical reproduction, it is, nevertheless, a "line drawing for reproduction" in the sense that reproduction comes by printing in multiple from the original wood-engraving.

This is practical, and indeed in the great tradition, as far as book printing is concerned ; but for magazine and newspaper printing a mould would have to be taken from the wood block, and a metal block called a stereo cast from it.

There is no reason therefore why the artist drawing for commerce should not use this medium if he wishes. Certainly no book on the 'line-approach' to drawing would be complete without a good example of wood-engraving.

The student could not do better therefore than study this illustration by a master of the craft. In John Farleigh's hands the special qualities of a wood-engraving are demonstrated. No other medium can give the incisiveness of line, the sharpness of contrast, and at the same time the delicacy and subtlety of tone.

The feminine roundness of his black girl against the masculine cubism of the Lord of Hosts in the background gives him the opportunity of exploiting brilliantly nearly all the effects possible in this medium. Only the white line method could get the transparency of forms necessary to giving the Lord of Hosts his disappearing quality.



Unified rhythmic design as well as a notation on life

Oscar Berger draws the essence of his subject in terms which explain it without necessarily using realistic means—notice Briand's left hand, the movement of which is symbolised far more cogently by two opposing sets of rhythmic lines, missing out a finger, than could be got by a more realistic approach. Again, by accenting the size of the eye of the camera man in the foreground, he conveys the sense of the "gouping" eye of the public. The great difference between Berger's technique and that of most caricaturists is, that he approaches his work as an artist, instead of only as a journalist. He makes a unified rhythmic design as well as a notation on life.

Peter Arno

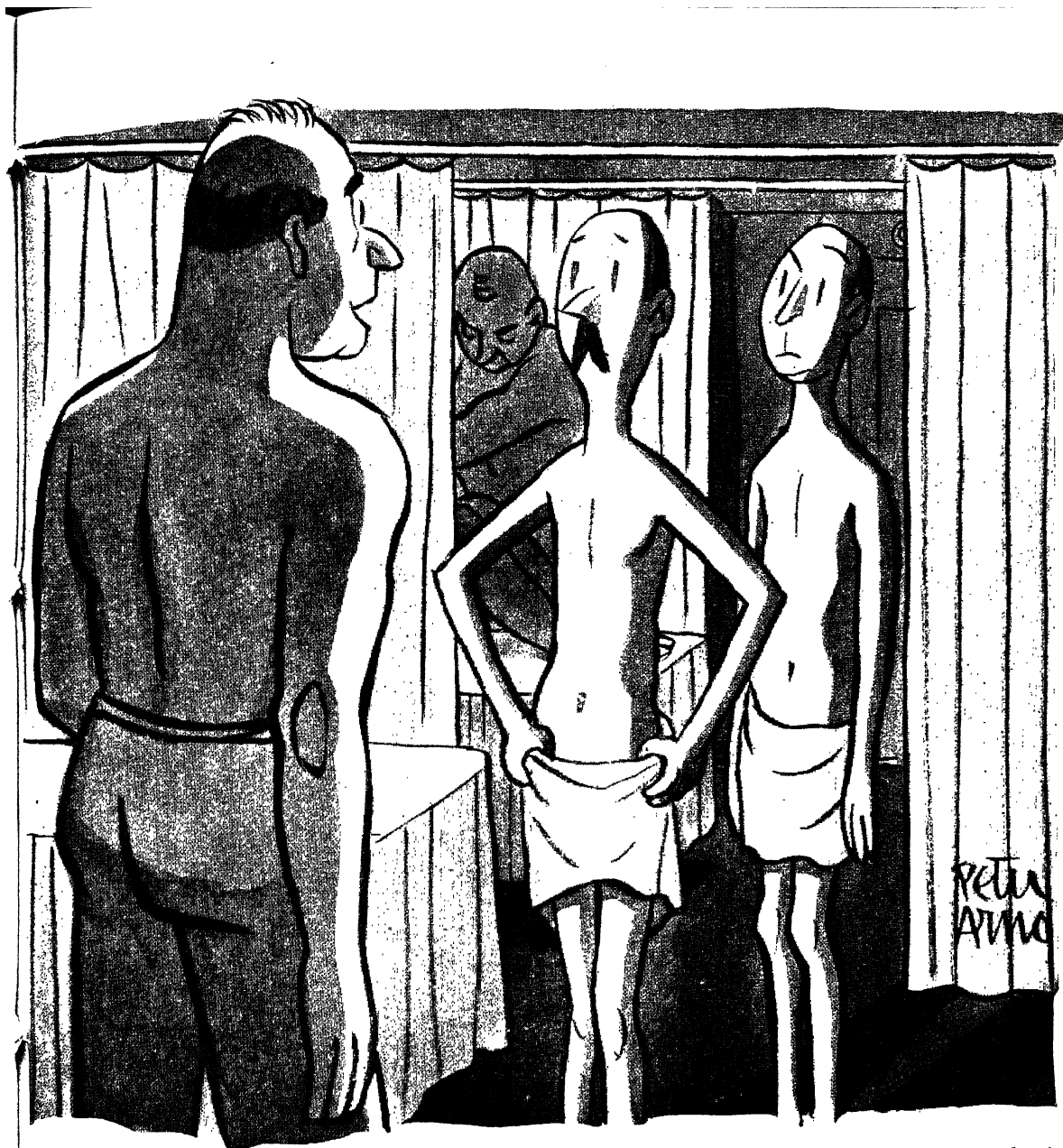
Peter Arno is quite one of the most stimulating of contemporary comic artists. The sureness of his characterisation, the simplicity of his method, the apparent spontaneity and dash of his work, are unique. I cannot do better at this point than quote from William Bolitho's introduction to "Peter Arno's Parade."*

"His style is not an eccentricity, that is to say, but a flavour, in which he differs from hordes of our uniform originalities who imitate their masters, their competitors and themselves so perfectly to-day that only a head bank cashier could identify even their signatures. In this process they have lost much more than authenticity; the imitator's most serious punishment is that he can never, by whatever fraction of an instant, be entirely up to date. I cannot think of any one to whom this instantaneous modernity is so necessary as to a comic artist, whose work must precede rather than follow our own self-consciousness. So this extreme and extraordinary synchronism of Peter Arno must be noticed at once."

Peter Arno's drawing on the opposite page has all the immediacy of a snapshot—it seems to have been drawn so rapidly that everything was recorded before it could move. His line is so sure that the same standard of draughtsmanship is maintained throughout every detail of his drawing. By leaving certain portions of the drawing dead white he not only gives life and sparkle to the composition, but also spotlights the chief characters, thereby intensifying the dramatic effect. Although at a casual glance, it would seem that what he draws is more important than the way he draws it, this is not really so. It is the way he draws it that makes us look at what he draws!

His method of indicating the different planes formed by the curtains receding into the background is perfectly in character with the rest of the drawing. It is simply the same approach put down on a larger scale. A few quick charcoal strokes are adequate to convey their effect without allowing them to compete with the action in the foreground. By a few deft washes the composition is built up to present a unified picture of four people in a room; one feels almost that even the air they breathe is drawn!

* A collection of Peter Arno's drawings (published by John Lane).

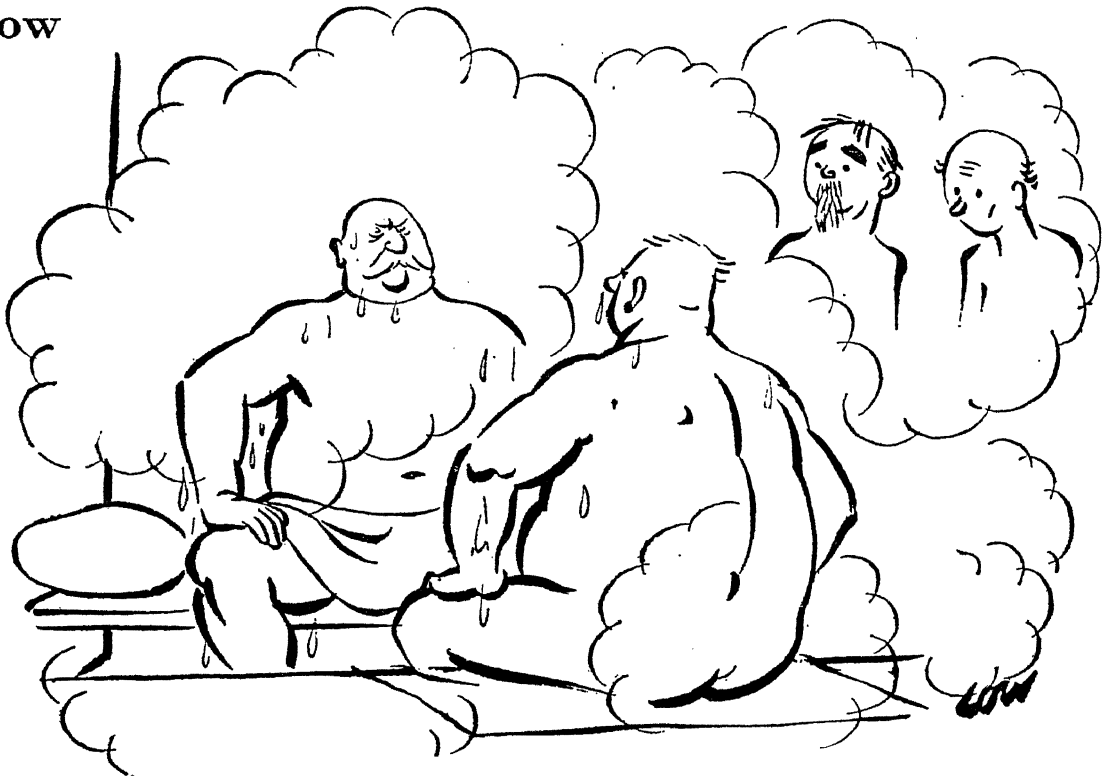


(Courtesy of "The New Yorker")

"If you gentlemen are in a hurry, I can handle you both at once."

Vigorous—and to the point. Peter Arno's great economy of means, makes every line and tone do a job

Low



(Courtesy of "The Evening Standard")

Economy of line and power of suggestion

The above drawing by Low, executed for newspaper reproduction, is an excellent example of his fluent brush work.

The economy of his line and its power of suggesting solid objects in space is founded on acute observation and a basic grounding in good draughtsmanship.

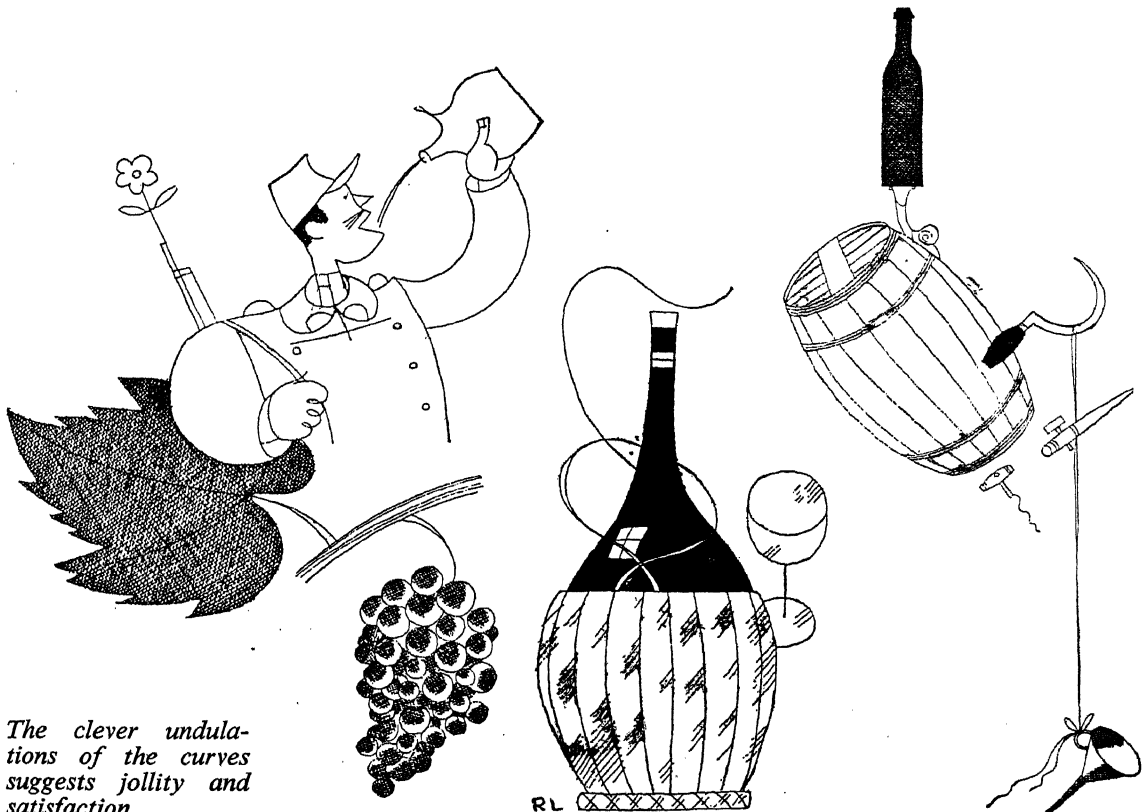
There is nothing slovenly in his line—and yet a less competent draughtsman would be hard put to it to convey anything like the same content and conviction with the simple means employed by Low. In defining simplicity one must be careful to distinguish between the simplicity of the simpleton and the simplicity evolved through complex thought and experiment.

You will notice Low gives his line interest and colour by varying its weight in a truly calligraphic manner. This same variation serves also to explain the form of the shapes he is depicting. It is this selection of the apt line that gives his drawing conviction and movement.

De Lavererie

The interesting thing about De Lavererie's line is its delicacy. Without "wobbling" or losing any of its charm, it proceeds on its way with all the sureness of a much bolder line. It is this uncompromising quality in its direction, as though the line simply had no alternative but to go where he has drawn it, that gives the little drawings shown below their decorative conviction. The incisiveness is further strengthened by the sudden use of intense black, or cross-hatched shapes, used in silhouette fashion to give body as well as colour to the drawing.

We sometimes talk about a person having a rapier-like wit. By this we mean a swift sharp repartee that does not rely on any laborious building up of effects. De Lavererie has this quality supremely. His clean-cut line defines his shapes precisely and without a single unnecessary stroke of the pen. Observe the man with the bottle. Without the help of any shading, but with just a few dexterous curves, and an occasional sharp angle in contrast, we have the most perfect picture of the sensuous joys of good wine. Note how the clever undulations of the curves suggest jollity and satisfaction.



The clever undulations of the curves suggests jollity and satisfaction

(Courtesy of "Vogue")

Eric Fraser

While the subject matter in these drawings is intensely human, indeed dramatic, its treatment is formal and stylised. It is this contrast between humanism and mathematical precision which gives Eric Fraser's work its strange force. By stylising his forms into a pattern, intricate, complicated, but never confused, he builds up a composition of mutually opposing shapes which enthrall the eye.

In spite of the use of washes in the large drawing opposite, the essence of Fraser's work lies in his masterly handling of pen-shading. Whether over large masses or for small details his change of direction and variety of hatching continually enrich his forms.

Unlike most pen artists who tend to think in line, Fraser succeeds in designing in mass. All his forms whether white paper enclosed by a line, or filled in with tone—either wash or pen hatching—are perfect shapes in themselves.

It is his inventiveness in creating such a variety of these shapes in one composition that gives his work its great interest.



*(Courtesy of the
"Radio Times")*



One of a series of drawings for "Benvenuto Cellini" (by courtesy of the artist)

Formal and stylised treatment adds richness and scale to a dramatic situation

Edward Bawden

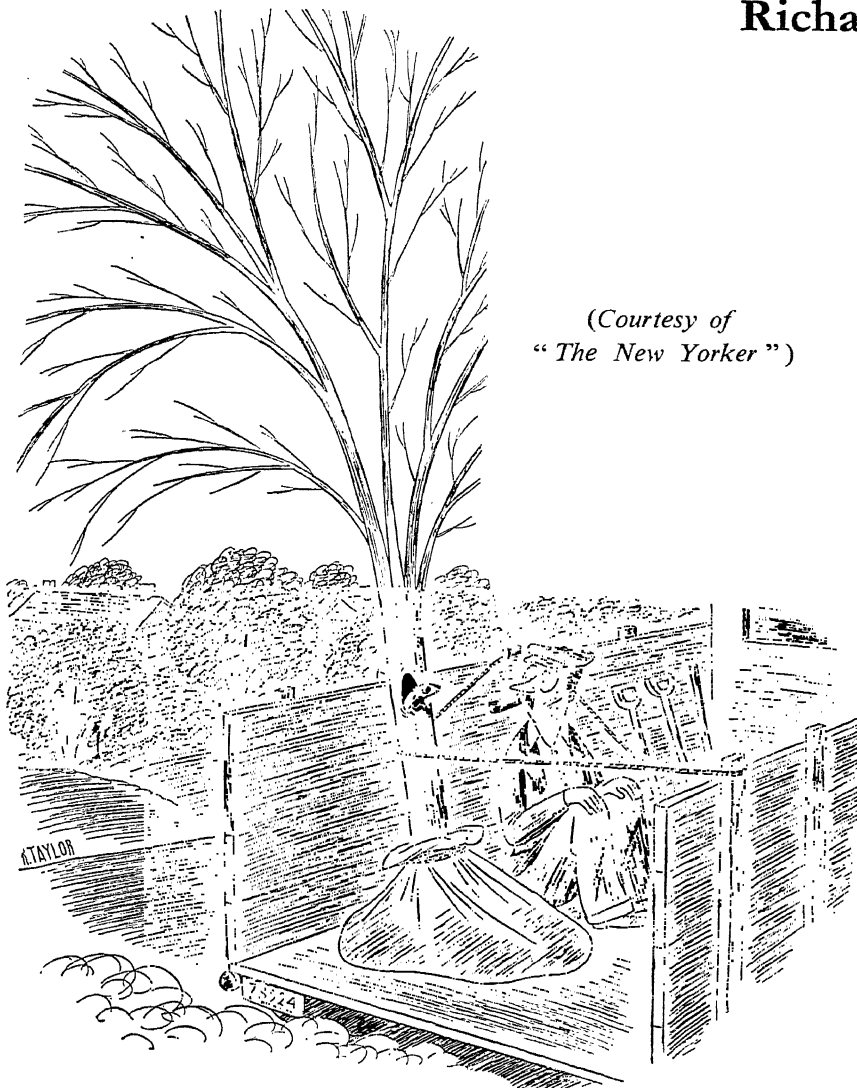
The interest of Bawden's work lies in his remarkable inventiveness in conventionalising simple objects in vivid decorative shapes. These shapes are defined with a most expressive line, varying in weight, texture and direction, which is a delight to the eye. His use of subtle accents of black and simple pen hatching gives his work richness and quality, and yet it seems to be produced with all the simple naïveté and lack of self-consciousness of a child.

How one envies apparently effortless work !



Remarkable inventiveness in conventionalising simple objects in vivid decorative shapes

Richard Taylor



(Courtesy of
"The New Yorker")

While basing his work on realistic situations, Taylor succeeds, by a curious line convention, in creating a strange world of fantasy. I think it is his use of line hatching to add weight and texture rather than as shadow building up form, that gives this effect. His delicate, rather decorative technique suits admirably the subtlety of his wit. The eye is led naturally to the point of the joke by a clever direction of the main lines of the composition.

Nicolas Bentley



Drawings from press advertisements for Wolsey Ltd.

Nicolas Bentley has brought to the humorous drawing a distinction and individuality which has established him as one of England's leading exponents of this form of art.

Unlike many humorists who rely on funny, irrational subject matter, Bentley prefers the normal rational situation, which he renders improbable by his treatment of it. Thus, I would say that Bentley is never comic, but always witty!

His work not only shows penetration into human character—but shows also great observation in appreciating all the visual details that combine to express it.

The distinguished appearance of his drawings is the result, I think, of his use of a thin line which never falters, but proceeds carefully all over the drawing, knitting every part together, creating a very neat and tidy effect. This line, without varying in weight and with no assistance from shading, is adequate in his hands to state the most complicated changes of direction in his forms and give a roundness and solidity to his figures.

The strength of his work lies, not in the weight of his line, but in its economy—he never uses two if one will do.

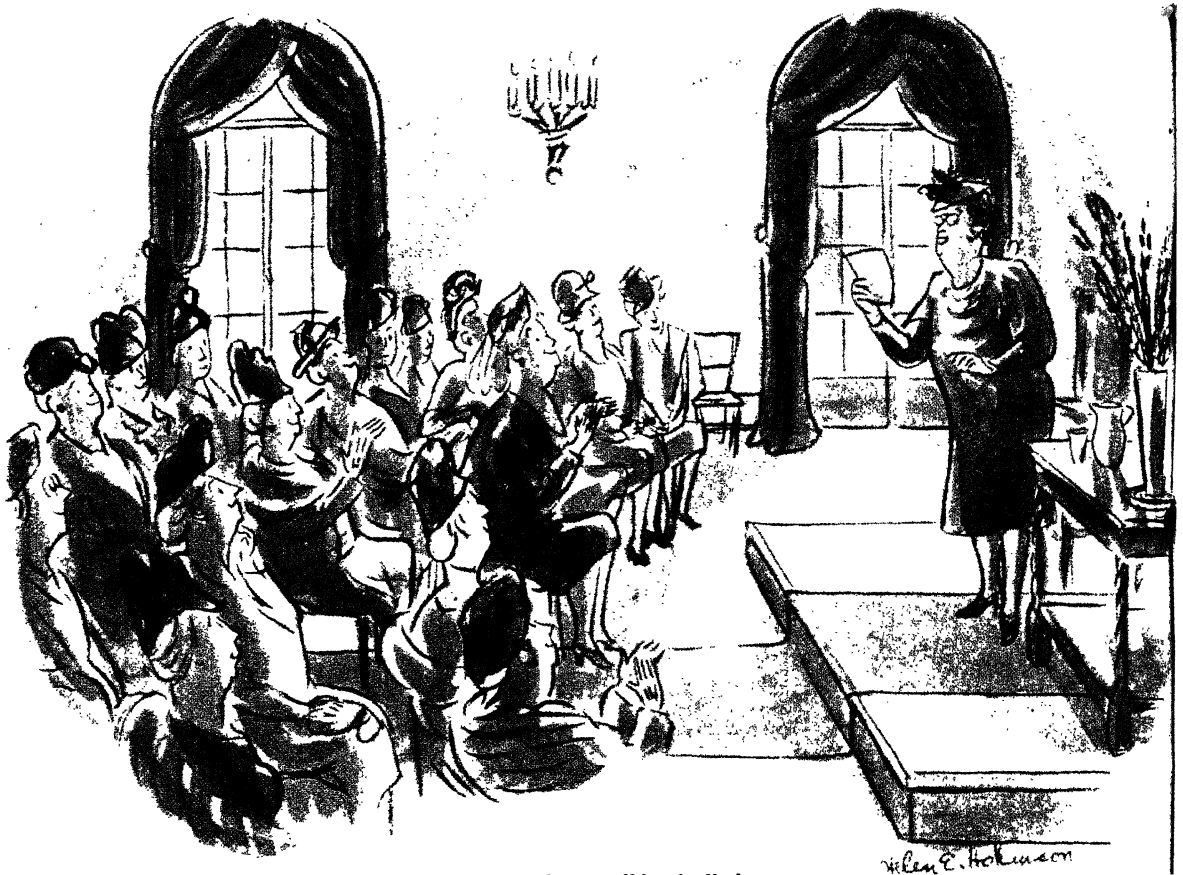


(By courtesy of the "Bystander")

"EH!"

*Distinguished appearance by
careful placing of significant lines*

Helen Hokinson

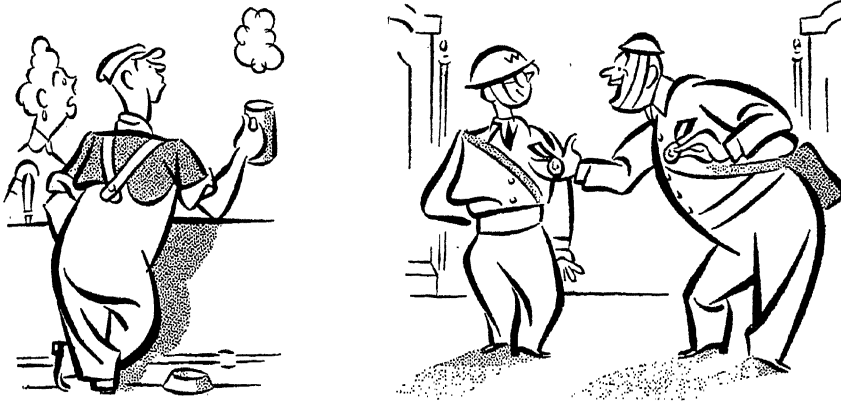


"In regard to our 'favourite-bird' poll, some of you will be thrilled to learn that the chickadee is leading by seventy-five votes."

(Courtesy of "The New Yorker")

Helen Hokinson's success is based on her remarkable insight into the character of the middle-class American matron, with her zest for corporate action and club life.

To portray her in action Helen Hokinson has created a matrix out of which she casts a prototype—and with a change of hat here, and a dress there, she can fill a large room with ease. A simple outline is enough for delineation. A few washes placed strategically give depth and three-dimensional reality. And yet, out of such simple means, Helen Hokinson has succeeded in creating an individual technique both charming and original, as well as a roomful of women who are human and convincing.



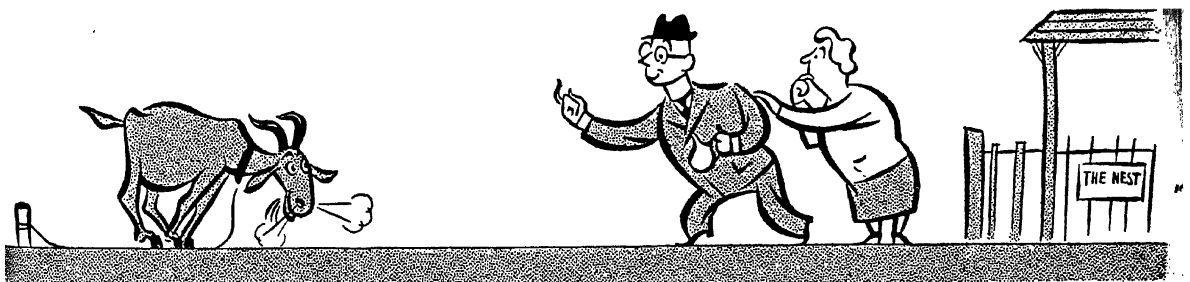
(Courtesy of the proprietors of "Punch")

Douglas England is well known for his amusing graphic notes accompanying the text in the famous Charivari of "Punch."

By holding up a mirror to life he records the pleasures and sorrows of the average man, with insight and understanding.

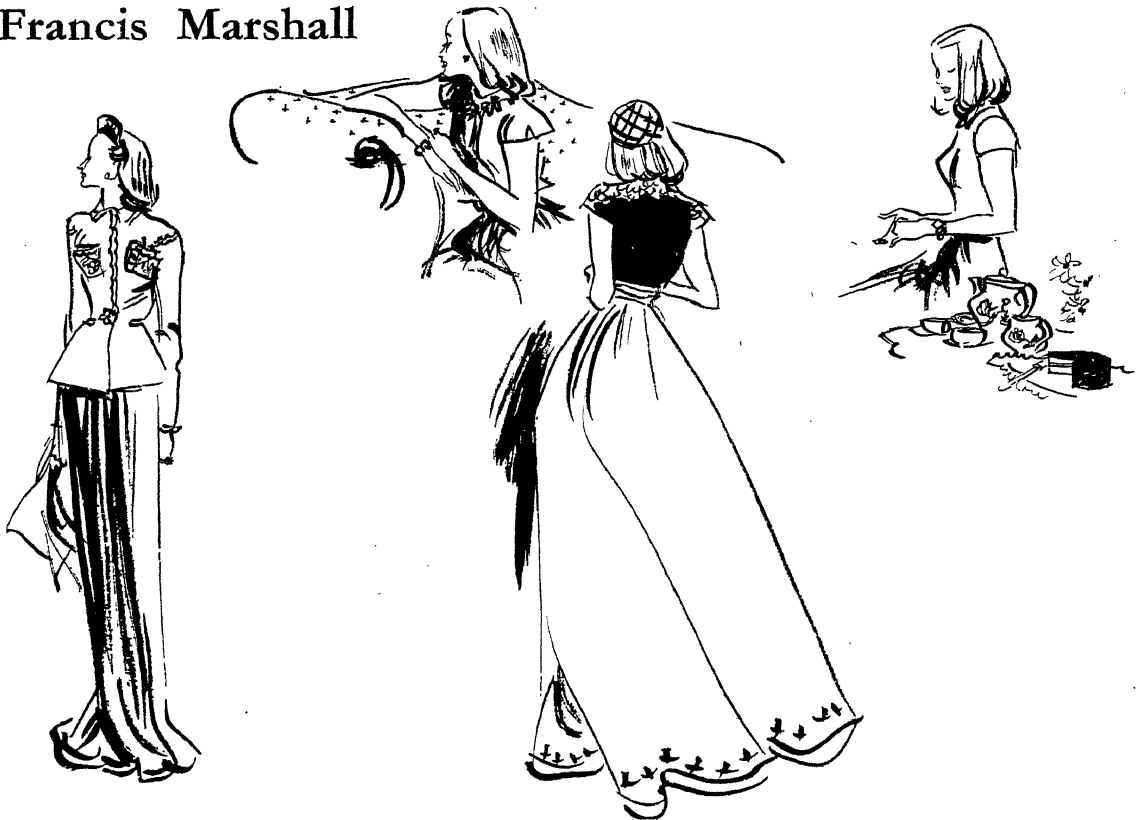
To do this he creates a pigmy world of his own, in which his little figures, shorn of all superfluous detail express only the points he wishes to bring out.

To be able to convey so much with such economy of line is the measure of his talent. He has ably solved the problem of vigorous expression within a small compass.



(Courtesy of the proprietors of "Punch")

Francis Marshall



Marshall's chief contribution to the art of fashion, it seems to me, is his great talent for simplification. He, more than any other artist, has brought boldness and directness of statement to fashion drawing by using an extremely vigorous brush line. We must not assume, however, that it is only because his work is bold that it is good. On the contrary, it is only because it is so good that it can afford to be so bold. Anyone of his lines put down in the wrong place would be disastrous. Actually, the inevitability of his line comes from a real knowledge of fashion. Thus he is able to select unerringly the points to be brought out in the particular clothes he is depicting.

That he expresses these points convincingly is only to be expected. That he expresses them boldly and with great simplicity is because he is Marshall. That is his personality and therefore his style. This bold individual style gives his work a great air of authority which is



*Drawing by Francis Marshall
for Elizabeth Arden Ltd.*



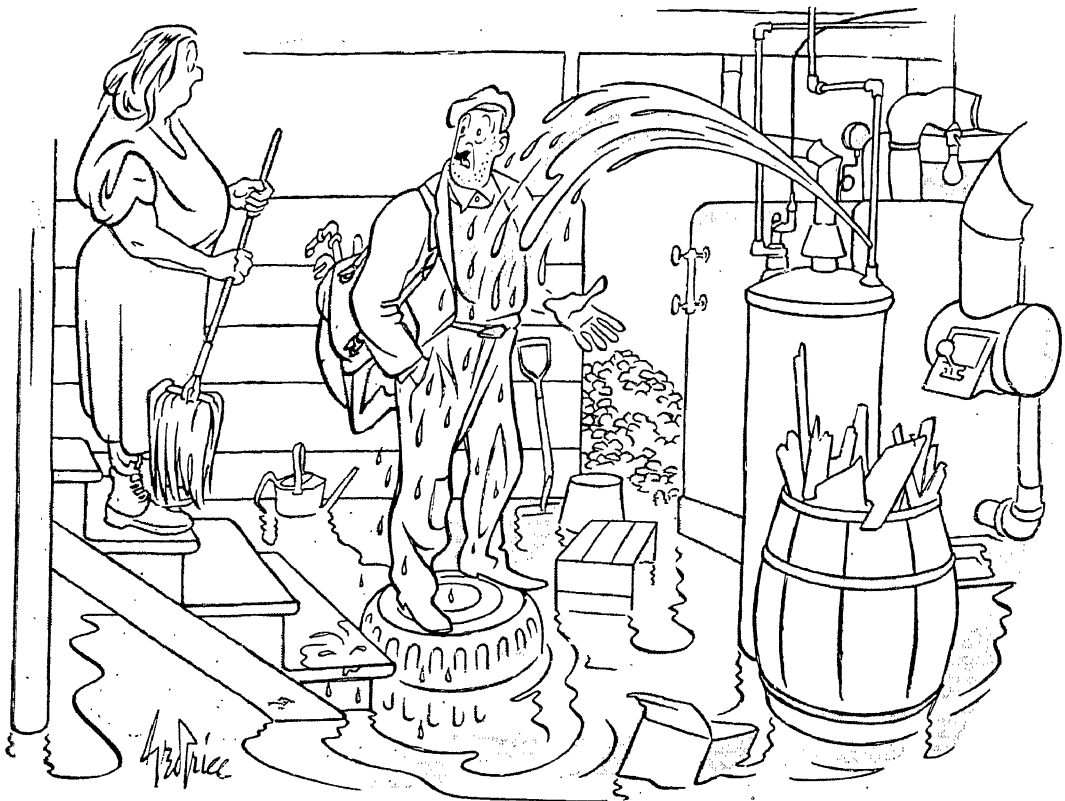
invaluable in establishing the fashionableness of the clothes shown.

A study of the accompanying drawings shows that whether it is a smart figure, a small detail, or a close-up of a lovely head, his simple forceful method of approach is the same.

Note—Admirers of Marshall's work who wish to pursue a study of *Fashion Drawing*, should read his excellent book on this subject. It is No. 30 in the "How to do it" series, published by The Studio.

George Price

(Courtesy of "The New Yorker")



"In non-technical language, Mrs. Wilson, it's busted."

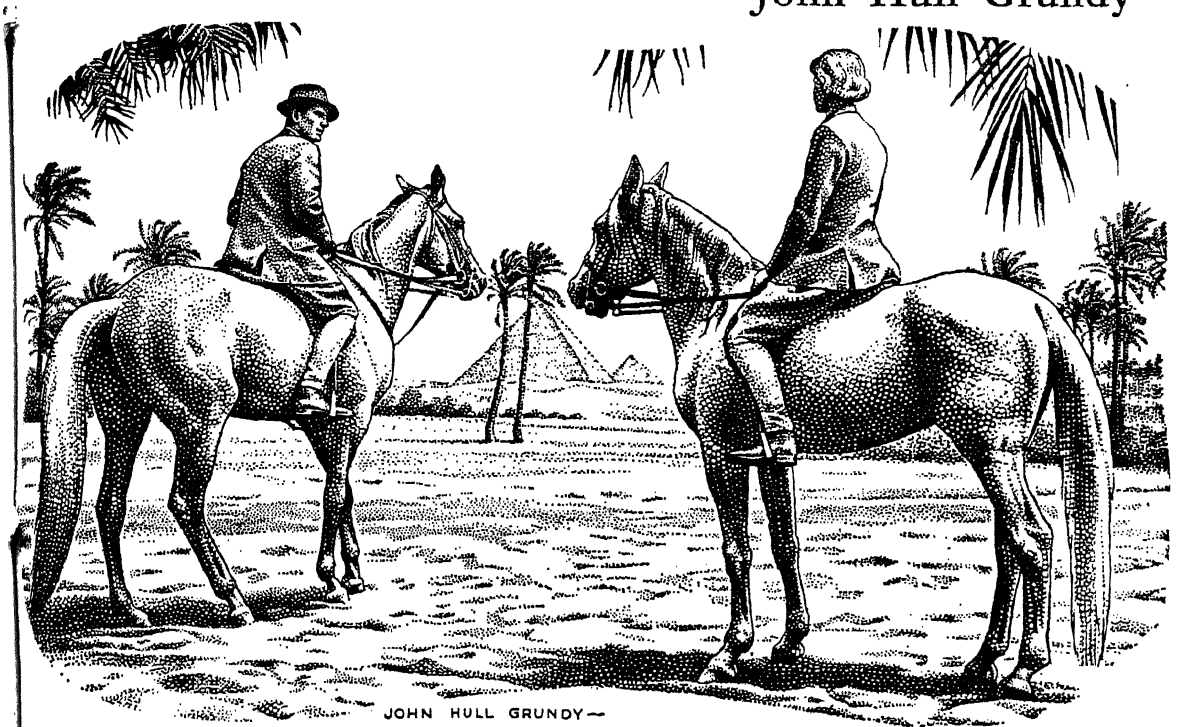
George Price is a good example of the humorous artist, who likes to appeal to the latent tendency in all of us to enjoy topsy-turvy situations.

He exploits in terms of drawing the same sort of irresponsibility that the Marx Bros. put over so successfully on the screen.

Notice how the loose flowing line brings out the futility of the two people who are quite incapable of coping with the catastrophe depicted, all of which was so obviously caused by the very man whose job it is to know how to put it right.

The special genius of his technique lies in his ability to create a kind of maelstrom of lines in which the eye is caught and held. It is his control of this turbulent line that gives his work so much vitality.

John Hull Grundy



(Drawing from a press advertisement for "Egypt")

The success of Grundy's work lies in his very careful study of the exact appearance of things. His work is like the projection of a film on the screen being stopped suddenly, freezing the characters in a moment of action.

Grundy seizes that moment, hence his composition seems always just about to move. He then proceeds lovingly to draw every detail, dot by dot. His technique is based on the principle of the half-tone screen where the darker shadows are got by the dots touching and running together, and the lighter tones by the dots getting smaller and isolating themselves from each other.

Consequently his tone values are controlled throughout by providing his own half-tone screen as it were, thus allowing facsimile reproduction in the form of a line block.

By bringing to the line drawing a modern equivalent of the care that the old Dutch masters used to put into their paintings, Grundy has established for himself a very personal technique which is remarkable for its originality and distinction.

Bobri

Vladimir Bobritsky—to give him his full name—left Russia after the Revolution. A long period of travel in many lands eventually ended in his arrival in America.

During his travels he was never without his sketch book. The knowledge he gained of the customs, folk-lore and art forms of many Asiatic and European peoples, has not only enriched his design vocabulary, but has led him to express himself in many different styles, and over a great range of subjects. To quote S. Yalkert, writing in *Art and Industry*: "It was Bobri who first employed lead pencil technique extensively for modern newspaper advertising. Draughtsmanship has become, with constant usage, another articular sense. He draws with the easy fluency of a language maker."

The drawings shown here are good examples of this fluency. The one below shows his skill in combining pen and charcoal to create a rich decorative composition of a romantic type.

The pencil drawing at the top of the opposite page is full of rhythm and movement. Note how the voluminous sweep of the lady's riding habit is echoed in the scroll and on the horse's neck and back. The enclosing of the rider in the scroll is a touch of fantasy, which not only binds the design together, but gives a poetic flavour to the whole composition. Observe also the different directions of the pencil shading which by variety of texture give depth to the design.

The seated figure below is interesting by reason of the contrast between the silhouetted mass of the back and the austerity of the line composing the face and the lower half of the drawing, the whole being relieved from rigidity by the casual humanistic spatterwork on the head and knee.



Bobri's period drawings gave "atmosphere" to the wares of Saks, Fifth Avenue



Bobri's mastery of technique enables him to move freely in all fields of expression ; from period to modern, from decorative to fashion



Hof

Most fashion artists tend to specialize in drawing either men or women—rarely are they able to deal successfully with both sexes.

Hof is fortunate in that he is equally skilful in the two fields. This is all the more remarkable when one realises that the kind of exaggeration necessary in bringing out the tough masculinity of the well-dressed man is the opposite of that required to stress the graceful femininity of the fashionable woman. There is also a further difference in that for a man the essence of being well-dressed is to be conventional, inconspicuous. The smart woman, on the contrary, enjoys being unconventional and therefore conspicuous in appearance.



In looking at the man on the left, we notice that in spite of his conventional appearance, Hof succeeds in drawing attention to the perfect cut of the clothes, by his skill in creating such a well-groomed and distinguished figure. Notice the self-assured nonchalance of pose, the exaggeration of the breadth of the shoulders, the exact placing of the significant folds that suggest the easy drape of good material. The cocky angle of the hat and the cheerful face give a liveliness and reality to the whole drawing.

To turn to the women, notice how feminine they look in spite of the trousers they're wearing. This is because Hof exaggerates the slimness of the waist and hips in relation to the height of the figures. By placing the waist high he elongates the legs, thus giving elegance to the pose. The conspicuous hat in

This illustration and the one on the opposite page are from press advertisements for Simpson, Piccadilly



relation to the broad shoulders gives a petite quality to the face of the standing woman. The angular placing of the straight lines of the deck chair, wheel-barrow and awning pole give interest and force to the composition, and by contrast stress the curvilinear forms of the feminine figure.

Barnett Freedman

When Barnett Freedman is working for newspaper reproduction, he uses a paper grained by himself to resemble the surface of a lithographic stone. This gives his chalk work all the crispness and openness of texture suitable to the making of a line block, while containing as much tone value as a fine-screen half-tone.

Through many years practice in drawing direct on the lithographic stone Barnett Freedman has acquired great skill in handling chalk shading. This is the basis of his technique. As you see below, although he uses a pen line to outline his main forms and to fill in small details such as the violin wires and the bees' wings, he relies on his chalk work to give the necessary depth and dignity to his design.

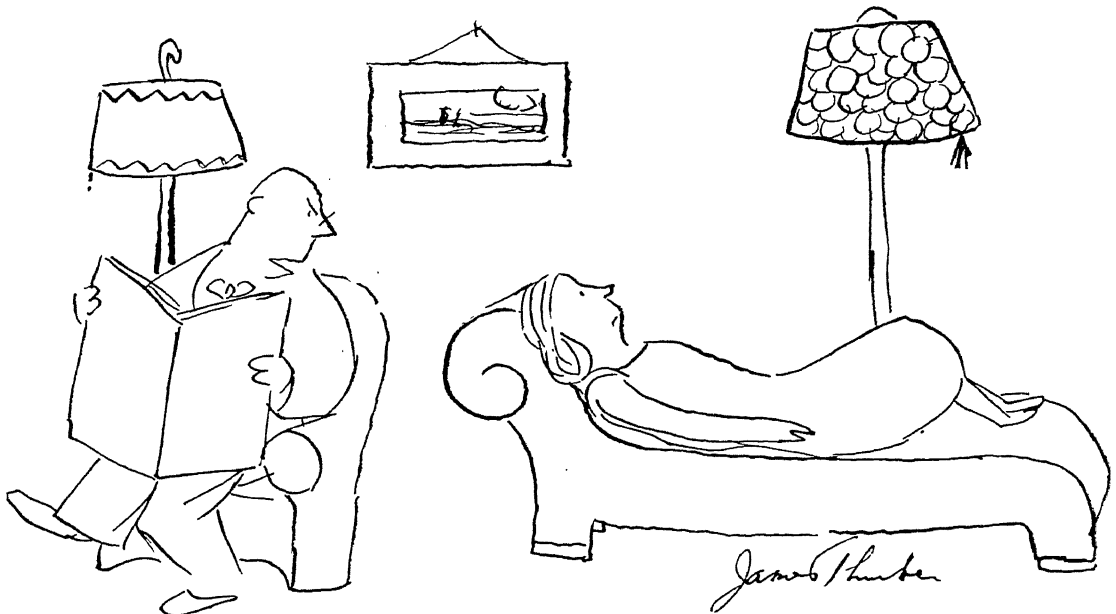
Indeed it is this clever shading technique, half stylised, half realistic, that makes his work so original and distinguished. At the same time it ensures perfect printing, because every single mark gets facsimile reproduction.

*Drawn
for press
advertisement
for
The Brewers'
Society*



James Thurber

(Courtesy of "The New Yorker")



"I do love you, I just don't feel like talking military tactics with you."

The basis of Thurber's wit is psychological. He exploits the latent mental conflict existing between the sexes. Although for the purpose of his joke his situation appears a particular one, its application is general. What he draws therefore, is symbolic rather than actual.

The universality of this approach allows Thurber great freedom of execution, since it releases him from all the bothersome problems of exact drawing necessary to the delineation of individual types and scenes.

Thurber takes full advantage of this freedom as you can see above. In fact, the chief joy of his technique lies in his complete disregard of all the difficulties that normally beset the path of the professional draughtsman.

He puts down his idea in a curious inspired "doodling" way, which because of his tremendous economy of line, has all the directness and explanatory simplicity of a diagram.

His success is undoubtedly the result of his clever exploitation of the surprise value of the contrast between an unsophisticated, almost child-like line, used to express sophisticated, very adult, thoughts.

Tage Werner



*The two drawings
reproduced here are by
courtesy of "Harper's Bazaar"*

Tage Werner relies on a form of exaggeration—almost caricature—to bring out the style points of the fashions he's depicting.

To enable him to do this successfully he finds it necessary to apply the same sort of exaggeration to his faces and the attitudes of his figures.

Notice in the girl above, how he makes it clear that the fashionable angle of the hat requires it to be almost balanced on the forehead. Absurd if carried too far—but he carries it far enough to make sure that this point is not overlooked. He treats the features with deft simplicity, thus allowing the emphasis to remain in the hat.

In the picture opposite, the introduction into the composition of officers, caricatured to stress their self-confidence, throws a "high command" atmosphere over the scene which imparts an authority and fashion exclusiveness to the clothes worn by the women.

Werner's amazing economy of line gives a lightness of touch which should be studied. By its use he not only subordinates the officers to the main wash drawing of the girls' clothes, but imparts a gaiety to the scene in tune with the ephemeral nature of the fashion world



Feliks Topolski



(Courtesy of "Vogue")

At a superficial glance Topolski's drawings appear to be quick scribbles. Looking closer his masterly draughtsmanship reveals itself.

Many artists confronted with recording a scene, are only able to put it down step by step, never being able to see it complete until the drawing is finished.

I have the feeling, after studying a Topolski drawing, that he has the curious knack of being able to see what he is about to draw complete on the paper before he starts. It is his enthusiasm in making this vision permanent before it fades that gives his technique its quick, almost febrile quality.

Of course, this vision, although based on the scene before him, has automatically undergone a transformation in its passage through Topolski's brain, with the distinguished and witty result that we see in these two drawings.

Topolski obviously decided early in his career that having "felt out" his forms rapidly, as it were, he would only detract from their deftness and spontaneity by attempting to finish them up.

Little did he know, then, that this technique would one day make him famous, and would give birth to a flood of imitations. These imitators, however, fail consistently—because they do not realise the necessity of a solid groundwork of observation and good drawing before such a free technique can have any conviction.



Felix Topolsky 1941
British Army Officers

(Courtesy of "World Review")

*A technique of astonishing spontaneity based on
close observation and masterly draughtsmanship*

Grafström

Grafström has won her place as one of the most distinguished fashion artists in America because of the sensitive artistry of her technique.

Using a brush line with dash and spontaneity, and varying it from thin elegant strokes to broad sweeps, Grafström gives depth to her composition and roundness and solidity to her figures.

Her knowledge of fashion and therefore of fashionable types enables her to use unconventional poses with conviction.

In spite of her drawing being occasionally anatomically inaccurate (note the left forearm of the seated man) she gets the spirit of her subject over by this very directness and sketchiness of method. The fact that Grafström's work is not "niggled" over gives it grandeur and scale. This imparts the air of an authoritative statement on the fashions depicted.

The tendency today in fashion drawing is to get away from showing clothes from the dressmaker's or tailor's point of view (i.e., drawing every stitch and button) and to draw them more from the wearer's point of view. This means showing how they look in life in the right social settings, and therefore, with the nonchalant air appropriate to the wearing of good clothes.

As it must be assumed these clothes will be worn by travelled and cultured people, or by those who wish to appear so, it follows that the style of drawing, if it is to get attention, should resemble the kind that these people have learned to admire as good drawing in other spheres.

In other words, since the subject matter is the new forms in contemporary fashions, the execution should be reminiscent in style of the new forms in the best contemporary art. Only thus will the fashions depicted carry conviction.

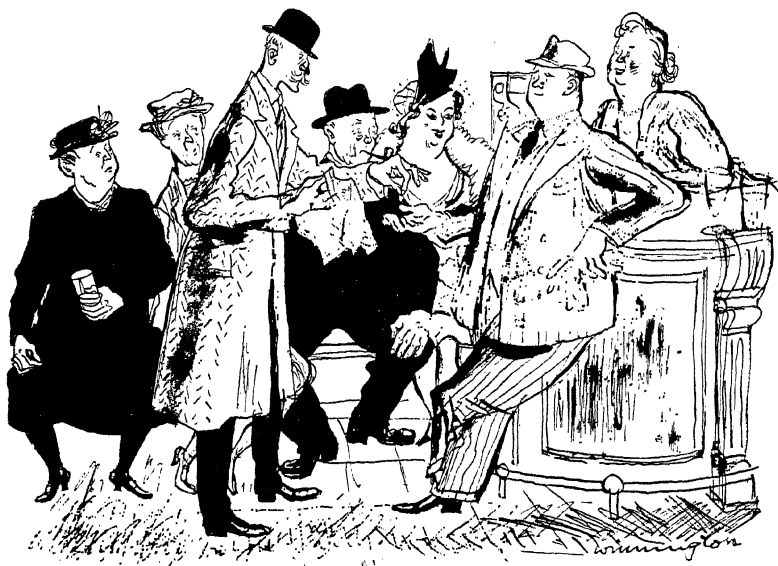
In the realm of fashion, therefore, *all drawings should be good art—if they are to be good advertising!*

Grafström's drawing opposite proves this contention if nothing else were needed, but we have in fact to mention only one other—the great work of Erickson which also points this moral.

(Illustration by courtesy of "Esquire")



Richard Winnington



(Illustrations by courtesy of "News Chronicle")

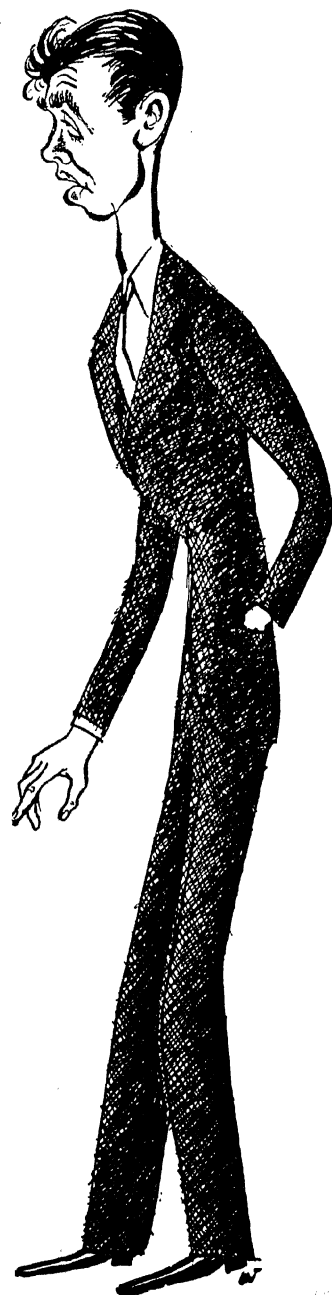
In the two drawings shown here Winnington displays his obvious talent for characterisation.

In the drawing above the apparent sketchiness is invaluable in conveying a feeling of notes made on the spot.

Apart from the interesting arrangement of the seven figures, his composition is enriched by his ingenious grading of textures, from absolute solid blacks through spatter and cross-hatching to thin pen lines full of visual information.

This technique creates a sense of depth and gives colour to his scene.

Unlike the drawing above in which the figures are of normal proportions, the drawing of James Stewart on the right, being a caricature, is free to depart from them. His well-known awkward gestures are typified by the elongation of the limbs. The expression of his face is deftly conveyed by a few swelling lines. The strong cross-hatching on the figure gives solidity to the form, and helps to intensify the silhouette.





David Green

*Design from a pamphlet advertising
The Mills Novelty Company of Chicago*

The title to this picture is "Ah's got a melon." By carrying exaggeration to extremes David Green has certainly created a mouth-watering composition. Notice how the lines of the mouth echo the curves in the melon. Also the centre line of the mouth is approximately the same curve as the top of the head. The dots in the eyes echo the only other dots in the picture, namely the pips in the melon. Thus the face and the melon are mutually attracted to each other by related curves. These curves are balanced and offset by the straightness of the neck and the opposing triangle of the arm and forearm. An excellent example of the underlying value of good design if a drawing is to have vitality as well as originality.

Robb

The purpose of the illustration opposite is to advertise men's sports clothes. Nevertheless Robb shows us how such a subject can be anything but dull.

By breaking away from conventional methods of portrayal, he has created a scene evocative of English sporting traditions. The introduction of women is an ingenious idea to add interest to a picture required to appeal solely to men.

His men could only be Englishmen. His women have that healthy nonchalant look which is admired all over the world. Such is the power of his delineation that the imagination can fill in without difficulty the clear blue eyes and pink and white complexion of the girl on the horse.

Notice that while the weight and emphasis is on the two men in the foreground, the skilful suggestion of the correct setting in which these clothes might be worn, is very clever. It would tend to make a man looking at this picture have confidence in the quality of the clothes depicted.

Robb achieves all his effects, whether in the solid more detailed work of the men's figures or in the outline drawing of the background scene, by the use of a firm brush technique. Notice how in the background he succeeds by correct placing and good drawing, in creating sufficient interest in his forms, without the necessity of varying appreciably the weight of his line.

This strong firm method of drawing is excellent for newspaper reproduction, because it prints well and stands out boldly from the page.



*Illustration from a
press advertisement
for Austin Reed Ltd.*

*Ingenious use of vigorous line in background
to draw attention to tone figures in foreground*



Drawn for press advertisement for The Brewers'

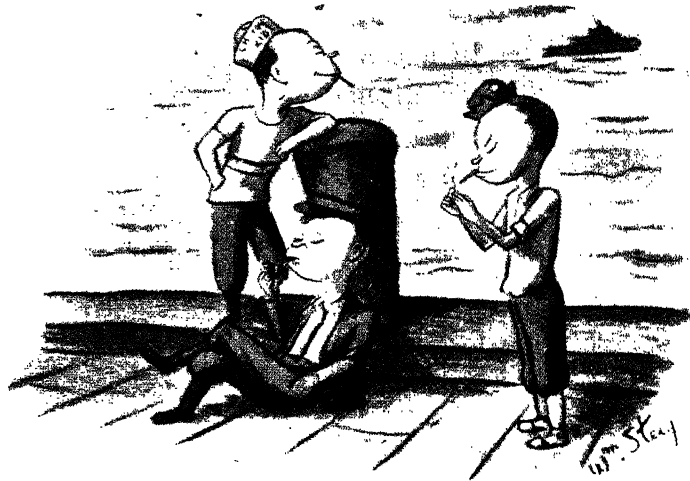
The virtue in Easton's scraper-board work seems to me to lie in the contrast between the warm humanism of his subject and the cold calculation of the rigid groups of lines on which his technique of drawing is based. The surprise of this contrast fills one with astonishment. It seems impossible that the eye and hand of the artist could guide themselves through this maze of lines, and yet produce such a coherent and satisfying result.

If this picture had been a photograph it would still have been interesting because of the pose and expression of the face, but it would have had nothing like the character and force of Easton's drawing. The tones except as shadows and modelling would have no interest, it would just be another photograph. Easton makes it into something unique. His lines not only enrich the surface, but stress the forms, bringing out each detail and change of direction on the head. Notice particularly how they seem to be drawn on an actual face following in and out of every dent and bump.

This technique is not only dramatic, it is invaluable from a printing point of view; even on the worst newspaper surface not a line would be lost.

William Steig

(Courtesy of "The New Yorker")



Nicotine

Steig has entertained us for years in the sparkling pages of the *New Yorker*. His caricatures of the foibles and futilities of the middle-class American man or woman, caught in "off-guard" moments, led him naturally to explore also the fun to be found in the pranks of their off-spring. Under the title "Small Fry" he has shown us on different occasions every aspect of their activities.

As will be seen above, the basis of his success is his ability to create atmosphere and life with a few lines and washes. Although his forms have a simple outline, the deep shadows give them roundness and substance.

This direct approach gives spontaneity and sparkle to his work. The quaint convention of the big heads on small bodies not only establishes the small boy symbol, but the exaggeration suggests immediately the know-all cockiness of the boy's brain in contrast to the childishness of his frame, thus bringing out the point of the drawing.

These three "tough guys" not only symbolize the self-confidence of American youth, but the way they are grouped together demonstrates the masterly skill in composition of their creator.

